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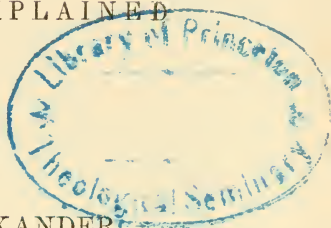


# ISAIAH

TRANSLATED AND EXPLAINED

BY

JOSEPH ADDISON ALEXANDER.



AN ABRIDGMENT OF THE AUTHOR'S CRITICAL

COMMENTARY ON ISAIAH.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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THE last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah (xl—lxvi) form a distinct and continuous discourse, connected with the former part, and at the same time separated from it by four chapters (xxxvi—xxxix) almost entirely historical. These later Prophecies of Isaiah have a character so marked and so peculiar as to call for some additional preliminary views in the shape of a separate and special introduction.

One of the most important functions of the prophetic office was the exposition of the Law, that is to say, of the Mosaic institutions, the peculiar form in which the Church was organized until the advent of Messiah. This inspired exposition was of absolute necessity, in order to prevent or to correct mistakes which were constantly arising, not only from the blindness and perverseness of the people, but from the very nature of the system under which they lived. That system, being temporary and symbolical, was necessarily material, ceremonial, and restrictive in its forms; as nothing purely spiritual could be symbolical or typical of other spiritual things, nor could a catholic or free constitution have secured the necessary segregation of the people from all others for a temporary purpose.

The evils incident to such a state of things were the same that have occurred in many other like cases, and may all be derived from the superior influence of sensible objects on the mass of men, and from the consequent propensity to lose sight of the end in the use of the means, and to confound the sign

with the thing signified. The precise form and degree of this perversion no doubt varied with the change of times and circumstances, and a corresponding difference must have existed in the action of the Prophets who were called to exert a corrective influence on these abuses.

In the days of Hezekiah, the national corruption had already passed through several phases, each of which might still be traced in its effects, and none of which had wholly vanished. Sometimes the prevailing tendency had been to make the ceremonial form of the Mosaic worship, and its consequent coincidence in certain points with the religions of surrounding nations, an occasion or a pretext for adopting heathen rites and usages, at first as a mere extension and enlargement of the ritual itself, then more boldly as an arbitrary mixture of heterogeneous elements, and lastly as an open and entire substitution of the false for the true, and of Baal, Ashtoreth, or Moloch, for Jehovah.

At other times the same corruption had assumed a less revolting form and been contented with perverting the Mosaic institutions while externally and zealously adhering to them. The two points from which this insidious process of perversion set out were the nature and design of the ceremonial law, and the relation of the chosen people to the rest of men. As to the first, it soon became a current and at last a fixed opinion with the mass of irreligious Jews, that the ritual acts of the Mosaic service had an intrinsic efficacy, or a kind of magical effect upon the moral and spiritual state of the worshipper. Against this error the Law itself had partially provided by occasional violations and suspensions of its own most rigorous demands, plainly implying that the rites were not intrinsically efficacious, but significant of something else. As a single instance of this general fact it may be mentioned, that although the sacrifice of life is everywhere throughout the ceremonial law presented as the symbol of atonement, yet in certain cases, where the circumstances of the offerer forbade an animal oblation, he was suffered

to present one of a vegetable nature, even where the service was directly and exclusively expiatory; a substitution wholly inconsistent with the doctrine of an intrinsic virtue or a magical effect, but perfectly in harmony with that of a symbolical and typical design, in which the uniformity of the external symbol, although rigidly maintained in general, might be dispensed with in a rare and special case without absurdity or inconvenience.

It might easily be shown that the same corrective was provided by the Law itself in its occasional departure from its own requisitions as to time and place and the officiating person; so that no analogy whatever really exists between the Levitical economy, even as expounded by itself, and the ritual systems which in later times have been so confidently built upon it. But the single instance which has been already cited will suffice to illustrate the extent of the perversion which at an early period had taken root among the Jews, as to the real nature and design of their ceremonial services. The natural effect of such an error on the spirit and the morals is too obvious in itself, and too explicitly recorded in the sacred history, to require either proof or illustration.

On the other great point, the relation of the Jews to the surrounding nations, their opinions seem to have become at an early period equally erroneous. In this as in the other case, they went wrong by a superficial judgment founded on appearances, by looking simply at the means before them, and neither forwards to their end, nor backwards to their origin. From the indisputable facts of Israel's divine election as the people of Jehovah, his extraordinary preservation as such, and his undisturbed exclusive possession of the written word and the accompanying rites, they had drawn the natural but false conclusion, that this national pre-eminence was founded on intrinsic causes, or at least on some original and perpetual distinction in their favour. This led them to repudiate or forget the fundamental truth of their whole history, to wit, that they were set

apart and kept apart, not for the ruin and disgrace, but for the ultimate benefit and honour of the whole world, or rather of the whole church which was to be gathered from all nations, and of which the ancient Israel was designed to be the symbol and the representative. As it had pleased God to elect a certain portion of mankind to everlasting life through Christ, so it pleased him that until Christ came, this body of elect ones, scattered through all lands and ages, should be represented by a single nation, and that this representative body should be the sole depository of divine truth and a divinely instituted worship; while the ultimate design of this arrangement was kept constantly in view by the free access which in all ages was afforded to the gentiles who consented to embrace the true religion.

It is difficult indeed to understand how the Jews could reconcile the immemorial reception of proselytes from other nations, with the dogma of national superiority and exclusive hereditary right to the divine favour. The only solution of this singular phenomenon is furnished by continual recurrence to the great representative principle on which the Jewish church was organized, and which was carried out not only in the separation of the body as a whole from other men, but in the internal constitution of the body itself, and more especially in the separation of a whole tribe from the rest of Israel, and of a single family in that tribe from the other Levites, and of a single person in that family, in whom was finally concentrated the whole representation of the Body on the one hand, while on the other he was a constituted type of the Head.

If the Jews could have been made to understand or to remember that their national pre-eminence was representative, not original; symbolical, not real; provisional, not perpetual; it could never have betrayed them into hatred or contempt of other nations, but would rather have cherished an enlarged and catholic spirit. as it did in the most enlightened, an effect

which may be clearly traced in the writings of Moses, David, and Isaiah. That view of the Mosaic dispensation which regards this Jewish bigotry as its genuine spirit is demonstrably a false one. The true spirit of the old economy was not indeed a latitudinarian indifference to its institutions, or a premature anticipation of a state of things still future. It was scrupulously faithful even to the temporary institutions of the ancient church; but while it looked upon them as obligatory, it did not look upon them as perpetual. It obeyed the present requisitions of Jehovah, but still looked forward to something better. Hence the failure to account, on any other supposition, for the seeming contradictions of the Old Testament, in reference to the ceremonies of the Law. If worthless, why were they so conscientiously observed by the best and wisest men? If intrinsically valuable, why are they disparaged and almost repudiated by the same men? Simply because they were neither worthless nor intrinsically valuable, but appointed temporary signs of something to be otherwise revealed thereafter; so that it was equally impious and foolish to reject them altogether with the skeptic, and to rest in them forever with the formalist.

It is no less true, and for exactly the same reason, that the genuine spirit of the old economy was equally adverse to all religious mixture with the heathen or renunciation of the Jewish privileges on one hand, and to all contracted national conceit and hatred of the gentiles on the other. Yet both these forms of error had become fixed in the Jewish creed and character long before the days of Hezekiah. That they were not universal even then, we have abundant proof in the Old Testament. Even in the worst of times, there is reason to believe that a portion of the people held fast to the true doctrine and the true spirit of the extraordinary system under which they lived. How large this more enlightened party was at any time, and to how small a remnant it was ever reduced, we have not the means of ascertaining; but we know that it was always in

existence, and that it constituted the true Israel, the real church of the Old Testament.

To this class the corruption of the general body must have been a cause not only of sorrow but of apprehension; and if express prophetic threatenings had been wanting, they could scarcely fail to anticipate the punishment and even the rejection of their nation. But in this anticipation they were themselves liable to error. Their associations were so intimately blended with the institutions under which they lived, that they must have found it hard to separate the idea of Israel as a church from that of Israel as a nation; a difficulty similar in kind, however different in degree, from that which we experience in forming a conception of the continued existence of the soul without the body. And as all men, in the latter case, however fully they may be persuaded of the separate existence of the spirit and of its future disembodied state, habitually speak of it in terms strictly applicable only to its present state; so the ancient saints, however strong their faith, were under the necessity of framing their conceptions, as to future things, upon the model of those present; and the imperceptible extension of this process beyond the limits of necessity would naturally tend to generate errors not of form merely but of substance. Among these we may readily suppose to have had place the idea that, as Israel had been unfaithful to its trust, and was to be rejected, the Church or People of God must as a body share the same fate; or in other words, that if the national Israel perished, the spiritual Israel must perish with it, at least so far as to be disorganized and resolved into its elements.

The same confusion of ideas still exists among the uninstructed classes, and to some extent among the more enlightened also, in those countries where the Church has for ages been a national establishment, and scarcely known in any other form; as, for instance, in Sweden and Norway among Protestants, or in Spain and Portugal among Papists. To the most devout



in such communities the downfall of the hierarchical establishment seems perfectly identical with the extinction of the church ; and nothing but a long course of instruction, and perhaps experience, could enable them to form the idea of a disembodied unestablished Christian church. If such mistakes are possible and real even now, we have little reason either to dispute their existence or to wonder at it, under the complicated forms and in the imperfect light of the Mosaic dispensation. It is not only credible but altogether natural, that even true believers, unassisted by a special revelation, should have shunned the extreme of looking upon Israel's pre-eminence among the nations as original and perpetual, only by verging towards the opposite error of supposing that the downfall of the nation would involve the abolition of the church, and human unbelief defeat the purposes and make void the promises of God.

Here then are several distinct but cognate forms of error, which appear to have gained currency among the Jews before the time of Hezekiah, in relation to the two great distinctive features of their national condition, the ceremonial law and their seclusion from the gentiles. Upon each of these points there were two shades of opinion entertained by very different classes. The Mosaic ceremonies were with some a pretext for idolatrous observances, while others rested in them, not as types or symbols, but as efficacious means of expiation. The pre-eminence of Israel was by some regarded as perpetual, while others apprehended in its termination the extinction of the church itself. These various forms of error might be variously combined and modified in different cases, and their general result must of course have contributed largely to determine the character of the church and nation.

It was not, perhaps, until these errors had begun to take a definite and settled form among the people, that the Prophets, who had hitherto confined themselves to oral instruction or historical composition, were directed to utter and record for

constant use discourses meant to be corrective or condemnatory of these dangerous perversions. This may at least be regarded as a plausible solution of the fact that prophetic writing in the strict sense became so much more abundant in the later days of the Old Testament history. Of these prophetic writings, still preserved in our canon, there is scarcely any part which has not a perceptible and direct bearing on the state of feeling and opinion which has been described. This is emphatically true of Isaiah's earlier prophecies, which, though so various in form, are all adapted to correct the errors in question, or to establish the antagonistic truths. This general design of the predictions might be so used as to throw new light upon their exposition, by connecting it more closely with the prevalent errors of the ancient church than was attempted in the other volume. Guided even by this vague suggestion, an attentive reader will be able for the most part to determine with respect to each successive portion whether it was specially intended to rebuke idolatry, to rectify the errors of the formalist in reference to the ceremonial system, to bring down the arrogance of a mistaken nationality, or to console the true believer by assuring him that though the carnal Israel should perish, the true Israel must endure forever.

But although this purpose may be traced, to some extent, in all the prophecies, it is natural to suppose that some part of the canon would be occupied with a direct, extensive, and continuous exhibition of the truth upon a subject so momentous; and the date of such a prophecy could scarcely be assigned to any other period so naturally as to that which has been specified, the reign of Hezekiah, when all the various forms of error and corruption, which had successively prevailed were co-existent, when idolatry, although suppressed by law, was still openly or secretly practised, and in many cases superseded only by a hypocritical formality and ritual religion, attended by an overweening sense of the national pre-eminence of Israel, from which even the

most godly seem to have found refuge in despondent fears and skeptical misgivings. At such a time,—when the theocracy had long since reached and passed its zenith, and a series of providential shocks, with intervals of brief repose, had already begun to loosen the foundations of the old economy in preparation for its ultimate removal,—such a discourse as that supposed must have been eminently seasonable, if not absolutely needed, to rebuke sin, correct error, and sustain the hopes of true believers. It was equally important, nay, essential to the great end of the temporary system, that the way for its final abrogation should be gradually prepared, and that in the meantime it should be maintained in constant operation.

If the circumstances of the times which have been stated are enough to make it probable that such a revelation would be given, they will also aid us in determining beforehand, not in detail but in the general, its form and character. The historical occasion and the end proposed would naturally lead us to expect in such a book the simultaneous or alternate presentation of a few great leading truths, perhaps with accompanying refutation of the adverse errors, and with such reproofs, remonstrances and exhortations, promises and threatenings, as the condition of the people springing from these errors might require, not only at the date of the prediction but in later times. In executing this design the Prophet might have been expected to pursue a method more rhetorical than logical, and to enforce his doctrine not so much by dry didactic statements as by animated argument combined with earnest exhortation, passionate appeals, poetical apostrophes, impressive repetitions, and illustrations drawn both from the ancient and the later history of Israel. In fine, from what has been already said, it follows that the doctrines, which would naturally constitute the staple of the prophecy in such a case, are those relating to the true design of Israel's vocation and seclusion from the gentiles, and of the ceremonial institutions under which he was in honourable bon

dage. The sins and errors which find their condemnation in the statement of these truths are those of actual idolatry, a ritual formality, a blinded nationality, and a despondent apprehension of the failure of Jehovah's promise. Such might even *a priori* be regarded as the probable structure and complexion of a prophecy or series of prophecies intended to secure the end in question. If the person called to this important service had already been the organ of divine communications upon other subjects, or with more direct reference to other subjects, it would be reasonable to expect a marked diversity between these former prophecies and that uttered under a new impulse. Besides the very great and striking difference which must always be perceptible between a series of detached compositions, varying and possibly remote from one another as to date, and a continuous discourse on one great theme, there would be other unavoidable distinctions springing directly from the new and wide scope of prophetic vision, and from the concentration in one vision of the elements diffused through many others. This diversity would be enhanced by any striking difference of outward circumstances, such as the advanced age of the writer, his matured experience, his seclusion from the world and from active life, or any other changes which might have the same effect; but even in the absence of these outward causes, the diversity would still be very great and unavoidable.

From these probabilities let us now turn to realities. Precisely such a book as that described is extant, having formed a part of the collection of Isaiah's Prophecies as far back as the history of the canon can be traced, without the slightest vestige of a different tradition among Jews or Christians as to the author. The tone and spirit of these chapters (xl.—lxvi.) are precisely such as might have been expected from the circumstances under which they are alleged to have been written, and their variations from the earlier chapters such as must have been expected from the change in the circumstances themselves

A cursory inspection of these later prophecies is enough to satisfy the reader that he has before him neither a concatenated argument nor a mass of fragments, but a continuous discourse in which the same great topics are continually following each other, somewhat modified in form and combination, but essentially the same from the beginning to the end. If required to designate a single theme as that of the whole series, we might safely give the preference to Israel, the Peculiar People, the Church of the Old Testament, its origin, vocation, mission, sins and sufferings, former experience and final destiny. The doctrine inculcated as to this great subject may be summarily stated thus. The race of Israel was chosen from among the other nations, and maintained in the possession of peculiar privileges, not for the sake of any original or acquired merit, but by a sovereign act of the divine will; not for its own exclusive benefit and aggrandizement, but for the ultimate salvation of the world. The ceremonies, of the Law were of no intrinsic efficacy, and when so regarded and relied on became hateful in the sight of God. Still more absurd and impious was the practice of analogous ceremonies, not in obedience to Jehovah's will, but in the worship of imaginary deities or idols. The Levitical rites, besides immediate uses of a lower kind, were symbols of God's holiness and man's corruption, the necessity of expiation in general, and of expiation by vicarious suffering in particular. Among them there were also types, prophetic symbols, of the very form in which the great work of atonement was to be accomplished, and of Him by whom it was to be performed. Until this work was finished and this Saviour come, the promise of both was exclusively entrusted to the chosen people, who were bound to preserve it both in its written and its ritual form. To this momentous trust a large part of the nation had been unfaithful, some avowedly forsaking it as open idolaters, some practically betraying it as formal hypocrites. For these and other consequent offences, Israel as a nation was to be rejected and deprived of

its pre-eminence. But in so doing God would not cast off his people. The promises to Israel, considered as the people of Jehovah, should inure to the body of believers, the remnant according to the election of grace. These were in fact from the beginning the true Israel, the true seed of Abraham, the Jews who were Jews inwardly. In these the continued existence of the church should be secured and perpetuated, first within the limits of the outward Israel, and then by the accession of believing gentiles to the spiritual Israel. When the fulness of time should come for the removal of the temporary and restrictive institutions of the old economy, that change should be so ordered as not only to effect the emancipation of the church from ceremonial bondage, but at the same time to attest the divine disapprobation of the sins committed by the carnal Israel throughout their history. While these had everything to fear from the approaching change, the spiritual Israel had everything to hope ; not only the continued existence of the church, but its existence under a more spiritual, free, and glorious dispensation, to be ushered in by the appearance of that great Deliverer, towards whom the ceremonies of the Law all pointed.

From this statement of the Prophet's doctrine, it is easy to account for some peculiarities of form and phraseology, particularly for the constant alternation of encouragement and threatening, and for the twofold sense or rather application of the national name, Israel. This latter usage is explained by Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans (ch 2: 17-29. 9: 6-9. 11: 1-7), where the very same doctrine is propounded in relation to the ancient church that we have just obtained by a fair induction from Isaiah's later prophecies. There is in fact no part of the Old Testament to which the New affords a more decisive key in the shape of an authoritative and inspired interpretation. Another peculiarity of form highly important in the exposition of these Prophecies is the frequent introduction of allusions to particular events in the history of Israel, as examples of the general truths



so constantly repeated. The events thus cited are not numerous, but of the greatest magnitude, such as the calling of Abraham, the exodus from Egypt, the destruction of Babylon, the return from exile, and the advent of Messiah.

The following exposition supposes the main subject of these Prophecies, or rather of this Prophecy, to be the Church or People of God, considered in its members and its head, in its design, its origin, its progress, its vicissitudes, its consummation, in its various relations to God and to the world, both as a field of battle and a field of labour, an enemy's country to be conquered and an inheritance to be secured. Within the limits of this general description it is easy to distinguish, as alternate objects of prophetic vision, the two great phases of the Church on earth, its state of bondage and its state of freedom, its ceremonial and its spiritual aspect; in a word, what we usually call the Old and New Economy or Dispensation. Both are continually set before us, but with this observable distinction in the mode of presentation, that the first great period is described by individual specific strokes, the second by its outlines as a definite yet undivided whole. To the great turning point between the two dispensations the prophetic view appears to reach with clear discrimination of the intervening objects, but beyond that to take all in at a single glance. Within the boundaries first mentioned the eye passes with a varied uniformity from one salient point to another; but beyond them it contemplates the end and the beginning, not as distinct pictures, but as necessary elements of one. This difference might naturally be expected in a Prophecy belonging to the Old Dispensation, while in one belonging to the New we should as naturally look for the same definiteness and minuteness as the older prophets used in their descriptions of the older times.

If this be so, it throws a new light on the more specific Prophecies of this part of Isaiah, such as those relating to the Babylonish Exile; which are then to be regarded, not as the

main subject of the Prophecy, but only as prominent figures in the great prophetic picture, some of which were to the Prophet's eye already past, and some still future. In this respect the Prophecy is perfectly in keeping with the History of Israel, in which the Exile or the Restoration stands conspicuously forth as one of the great critical conjunctures which at distant intervals prepared the way for the removal of the ancient system, and yet secured its continued operation till the time of that removal should arrive. How far the same thing may be said of other periods which occupy a like place in the history of the Jews, such as the period of the Maccabees, is a question rendered doubtful by the silence of the Prophecy itself, and by the absence of any indications which are absolutely unambiguous. The specific reference of certain passages to this important epoch has no antecedent probability against it; but we cannot with the same unhesitating confidence assert such an allusion as we can in the case of Babylon and Cyrus, which are mentioned so expressly and repeatedly. It may be that historical discovery, the march of which has been so rapid in our own day, will enable us, or those who shall come after us, to set this question finally at rest. In the meantime it is safest to content ourselves with carefully distinguishing between the old and new economy as represented on the Prophet's canvass, without attempting to determine by conjecture what particular events are predicted even in the former, any further than we have the certain guidance of the Prophecy itself.

As to a similar attempt in reference to the New Dispensation, it is wholly inconsistent with the view which we have taken of the structure of these Prophecies, and which regards them not as particular descriptions of this or that event in later times, but as a general description of the Church in its emancipated state, or of the Reign of the Messiah, not at one time or another, but throughout its whole course, so that the faint light of the dawn is blended with the glow of sunset and the blaze

of noon. The form under which the Reign of Christ is here presented to and by the Prophet is that of a glorious emancipation from the bondage and the darkness of the old economy, in representing which he naturally dwells with more minuteness upon that part of the picture which is nearest to himself, while the rest is bathed in a flood of light, to penetrate beyond which, or to discriminate the objects hid beneath its dazzling veil, formed no part of this Prophet's mission, but was reserved for the ulterior revelations of the New Testament.

It is not however merely to the contrast of the two dispensations that the Prophet's eye is here directed. It would indeed have been impossible to bring this contrast clearly into view without a prominent exhibition of the great event by which the transition was effected, and of the great person who effected it. That person is the Servant of Jehovah, elsewhere spoken of as his Anointed or Messiah, and both here and elsewhere represented as combining the prophetic, regal, and sacerdotal characters suggested by that title. The specific relation which he here sustains to the Israel of God, is that of the Head to a living Body; so that in many cases what is said of him appears to be true wholly or in part of them, as forming one complex person, an idea perfectly accordant with the doctrines and the images of the New Testament. It appears to have been first clearly stated in the dictum of an ancient writer quoted by Augustin: "*de Christo et Corpore ejus Ecclesia tanquam de una persona in Scriptura saepius mentionem fieri, cui quaedam tribuuntur quae tantum in Caput, quaedam quae tantum in Corpus competunt, quaedam vero in utrumque.*" There is nothing in these Prophecies more striking or peculiar than the sublime position occupied by this colossal figure, standing between the Church of the Old and that of the New Testament, as a mediator, an interpreter, a bond of union, and a common head.

If this be a correct view of the structure of these prophecies

nothing can be more erroneous or unfriendly to correct interpretation than the idea, which appears to form the basis of some expositions, that the primary object in the Prophet's view is Israel as a race or nation, and that its spiritual or ecclesiastical relations are entirely adventitious and subordinate. The natural result of this erroneous supposition is a constant disposition to give everything a national and local sense. This is especially the case with respect to the names so frequently occurring, Zion, Jerusalem, and Judah; all which, according to this view of the matter, must be understood, wherever it is possible, as meaning nothing more than the hill, the city, and the land, which they originally designate. This error has even been pushed by some to the irrational extreme of making Israel as a race the object of the promises, after their entire separation from the church and their reduction for the time being to the same position with the sons of Ishmael and of Esau. That this view should be taken by the modern Jews, in vindication of their own continued unbelief, is not so strange as its adoption by some Christian writers, even in direct opposition to their own interpretation of former prophecies, almost identical in form and substance. The specifications of this general charge will be fully given in the exposition.

The claim of this mode of interpretation to the praise of strictness and exactness is a false one, if the Israel of prophecy is not the nation as such merely, but the nation as the temporary frame-work of the church, and if the promises addressed to it, in forms derived from this transitory state, were nevertheless meant to be perpetual, and must be therefore independent of all temporary local restrictions. The true sense of the prophecies in this respect cannot be more strongly or explicitly set forth than in the words of the Apostle, when he says that "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew;"—"Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the election hath obtained it and the rest were blinded;"—

“not as though the word of God hath taken none effect, for they are not all Israel which are of Israel.”

After carefully comparing all the methods of division and arrangement which have come to my knowledge, I am clearly of opinion that in this part of Scripture, more perhaps than any other, the evil to be shunned is not so much defect as excess; that the book is not only a continued but a desultory composition; that although there is a sensible progression in the whole from the beginning to the end, it cannot be distinctly traced in every minor part, being often interrupted and obscured by retrocessions and resumptions, which, though governed by a natural association in each case, are not reducible to rule or system. The conventional division into chapters, viewed as a mechanical contrivance for facilitating reference, is indispensable, and cannot be materially changed with any good effect at all proportioned to the inconvenience and confusion which would necessarily attend such a departure from a usage long established and now universally familiar. The disadvantages attending it, or springing from an injudicious use of it by readers and expounders, are the frequent separation of parts which as really cohere together as those that are combined, and the conversion of one great shifting spectacle, in which the scenes are constantly succeeding one another in a varied order, into a series of detached and unconnected pictures, throwing no light on each other even when most skilfully divided, and too often exhibiting a part of one view in absurd juxtaposition with another less akin to it than that from which it has been violently sundered.

The most satisfactory and useful method of surveying the whole book with a view to the detailed interpretation of the parts is, in my opinion, to obtain a clear view of the few great themes with which the writer's mind was filled, and of the minor topics into which they readily resolve themselves, and then to mark their varied combinations as they alternately pre

sent themselves, some more fully and frequently in one part of the book, some exclusively in one part, others with greater uniformity in all. The succession of the prominent figures will be pointed out as we proceed in the interpretation of the several chapters. But in order to afford the reader every preliminary aid before attempting the detailed interpretation, I shall close this Introduction with a brief synopsis of the whole, presenting at a single glance its prominent contents and the mutual relation of its parts.

The prominent objects here presented to the Prophet's view are these five. 1 The carnal Israel, the Jewish nation, in its proud self-reliance and its gross corruption, whether idolatrous or only hypocritical and formal. 2. The spiritual Israel, the true Church, the remnant according to the election of grace, considered as the object of Jehovah's favour and protection, but at the same time as weak in faith and apprehensive of destruction. 3. The Babylonish Exile and the Restoration from it, as the most important intermediate point between the date of the prediction and the advent of Messiah, and as an earnest or a sample of Jehovah's future dealing with his people both in wrath and mercy. 4 The Advent itself, with the person and character of Him who was to come for the deliverance of his people not only from eternal ruin but from temporal bondage, and their introduction into "glorious liberty." 5. The character of this new condition of the Church or of the Christian Dispensation, not considered in its elements but as a whole; not in the way of chronological succession, but at one view; not so much in itself, as in contrast with the temporary system that preceded it.

These are the subjects of the Prophet's whole discourse, and may be described as present to his mind throughout; but the degree in which they are respectively made prominent is different in different parts. The attempts which have been made to show that they are taken up successively and treated one by



one, are unsuccessful, because inconsistent with the frequent repetition and recurrence of the same theme. The order is not that of strict succession, but of alternation. It is still true, however, that the relative prominence of these great themes is far from being constant. As a general fact, it may be said that their relative positions in this respect answer to those which they hold in the enumeration above given. The character of Israel, both as a nation and a church, is chiefly prominent in the beginning, the Exile and the Advent in the middle, the contrast and the change of dispensations at the end. With this general conception of the Prophecy, the reader can have very little difficulty in perceiving the unity of the discourse, and marking its transitions for himself, even without the aid of such an abstract as the following.

The form in which the Prophecy begins is determined by its intimate connection with the threatening in the thirty-ninth chapter. To assure the Israel of God, or true church, that the national judgments which had been denounced should not destroy it, is the Prophet's purpose in the fortieth chapter, and is executed by exhibiting Jehovah's power, and willingness and fixed determination to protect and save his own elect. In the forty-first, his power and omniscience are contrasted with the impotence of idols, and illustrated by an individual example. In the forty-second, the person of the great Deliverer is introduced, the nature of his influence described, the relation of his people to himself defined, and their mission or vocation as enlighteners of the world explained. The forty-third completes this exposition by exhibiting the true design of Israel's election as a people, its entire independence of all merit in themselves, and sole dependence on the sovereign will of God. In the forty-fourth the argument against idolatry is amplified and urged, and the divine sufficiency and faithfulness exemplified by historical allusion to the exodus from Egypt, and a prophetic one to the deliverance from Babylon, in which

last Cyrus is expressly named. The last part of this chapter should have been connected with the first part of the forty-fifth, in which the name of Cyrus is repeated, and his conquests represented as an effect of God's omnipotence, and the prediction as a proof of his omniscience, both which attributes are then again contrasted with the impotence and senselessness of idols. The same comparison is still continued in the forty-sixth, with special reference to the false gods of Babylon, as utterly unable to deliver either their worshippers or themselves. In the forty-seventh the description is extended to the Babylonian government, as wholly powerless in opposition to Jehovah's interference for the emancipation of his people. The forty-eighth contains the winding up of this great argument from Cyrus and the fall of Babylon, as a conviction and rebuke to the unbelieving Jews themselves. The fact that Babylon is expressly mentioned only in these chapters, is a strong confirmation of our previous conclusion that it is not the main subject of the prophecy. By a natural transition he reverts in the forty-ninth to the true Israel, and shows the groundlessness of their misgivings, by disclosing God's design respecting them, and showing the certainty of its fulfilment notwithstanding all discouraging appearances. The difference in the character and fate of the two Israels is still more exactly defined in the fiftieth chapter. In the fifty-first the true relation of the chosen people both to God and to the gentiles is illustrated by historical examples, the calling of Abraham and the exodus from Egypt, and the same power pledged for the safety of Israel in time to come. In the last part of this chapter and the first of the fifty-second, which cohere in the most intimate manner, the gracious purposes of God are represented as fulfilled already, and described in the most animating terms. This view of the future condition of the church could not be separated long from that of Him by whom it was to be effected; and accordingly the last part of this chapter, forming one un-

broken context with the fifty-third, exhibits him anew, no longer as a teacher, but as the great sacrifice for sin. No sooner is this great work finished than the best days of the church begin, the loss of national distinction being really a prelude to her glorious emancipation. The promise of this great change in the fifty-fourth chapter, is followed in the fifty-fifth by a gracious invitation to the whole world to partake of it. The fifty-sixth continues the same subject, by predicting the entire abrogation of all local, personal, and national distinctions. Having dwelt so long upon the prospects of the spiritual Israel or true church, the Prophet, in the last part of the fifty-sixth and the first part of the fifty-seventh, looks back at the carnal Israel, as it was in the days of its idolatrous apostasy, and closes with a threatening which insensibly melts into a promise of salvation to the true Israel. The fifty-eighth again presents the carnal Israel, not as idolaters but as hypocrites, and points out the true mean between the rejection of appointed rites and the abuse of them. The fifty-ninth explains Jehovah's dealings with the nation of the Jews, and shows that their rejection was the fruit of their own doings, as the salvation of the saved was that of God's omnipotent compassions. In the sixtieth he turns once more to the true Israel, and begins a series of magnificent descriptions of the new dispensation as a whole, contrasted with the imperfections and restrictions of the old. The prominent figures of the picture in this chapter are immense increase by the accession of the gentiles, and internal purity and peace. The prominent figure in the sixty-first is that of the Messiah as the agent in this great work of spiritual emancipation. In the sixty-second it is that of Zion, or the Church herself, in the most intimate union with Jehovah and the full fruition of his favour. But this anticipation is inseparably blended with that of vengeance on the enemies of God, which is accordingly presented in the sublime vision of the sixty-third chapter, followed by an appeal to God's

former dealings with his people, as a proof that their rejection was their own fault, and that he will still protect the true believers. These are represented in the sixty-fourth as humbly confessing their own sins and suing for the favour of Jehovah. In the sixty-fifth he solemnly announces the adoption of the gentiles and the rejection of the carnal Israel because of their iniquities, among which idolatry is once more rendered prominent. He then contrasts the doom of the apostate Israel with the glorious destiny awaiting the true Israel. And this comparison is still continued in the sixty-sixth chapter, where the Prophet, after ranging through so wide a field of vision, seems at last to fix his own eye and his reader's on the dividing line or turning point between the old and new economy, and winds up the whole drama with a vivid exhibition of the nations gathered to Jerusalem for worship, while the children of the kingdom, i. e. Israel according to the flesh, are cast forth into outer darkness, where their worm dieth not and their fire is not quenched. Upon this awful spectacle the curtain falls, and we are left to find relief from its impressions in the merciful disclosures of a later and more cheering revelation.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE next four chapters contain a historical appendix to the first part of Isaiah's prophecies, which is at the same time a historical preface to the last part. The principal topics are Sennacherib's invasion and the slaughter of his host, Hezekiah's sickness and miraculous recovery, and the intercourse between him and the king of Babylon. The same narrative is found substantially in the second book of Kings (ch. xviii-xx), and a different account of the same matters in the second book of Chronicles (ch. xxxii). From the strong resemblance of the passages, and the impossibility of fixing upon either as the more ancient and authentic of the two, the natural inference would seem to be, that they are different draughts or copies of the same composition, or at least that they are both the work of the same writer, and that this writer is Isaiah. That the prophets often acted as historiographers, and that Isaiah in particular discharged this office, are recorded facts. Nothing can be more natural, therefore, than the supposition that he inserted the same narrative in one book as a part of the chronicle of Judah, and in the other as an illustrative appendix to his earlier prophecies. As to the variations of the two from one another, they are precisely such as might have been expected in the case supposed, that is to say, in the case of the same writer twice recording the same facts, especially if we assume an interval between the acts, and a more specific purpose in the

one case than the other. It must also be considered that on this hypothesis, the writer expected both accounts to be within the reach of the same readers, and might therefore leave them to illustrate and complete each other. That there is nothing in these variations to forbid the supposition of their being from the same pen, is evinced by the circumstance that each of the parallels has been declared, for similar reasons and with equal confidence, to be a transcript of the other. The specific end, for which the narrative is here recorded, appears to be that of showing the fulfilment of certain prophecies which had relation to a proximate futurity, and thereby gaining credence and authority for those which had a wider scope and a remoter consummation.

1. *And it was (or came to pass) in the fourteenth year of the king Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fenced (or fortified) cities of Judah, and took them.* The parallel passage in Kings is immediately preceded by a summary account of the earlier events of Hezekiah's reign, with particular mention of his religious reformatations and his extirpation of idolatry to which is added an account of the deportation of the ten tribes by Shalmaneser (2 Kings 18: 1-12). This visitation is referred to the apostasy of Israel as its meritorious cause, and contrasted with the favour of the Lord to Hezekiah as a faithful servant. While Ephraim was carried away never to return, Judah was only subjected to a temporary chastisement, the record of which follows. Sennacherib is mentioned, under nearly the same name, by Herodotus, who calls him the king of Assyria and Arabia. This may either be accounted for, as an example of the loose geographical distinctions of the ancient writers, or as implying that the Assyrian conquests really included certain portions of Arabia. Between this verse and the next, as they stand in Isaiah, the narrative in Kings inserts three others, which relate what immediately followed the invasion of the



country and preceded the attack upon Jerusalem. The substance of this statement is that Hezekiah sent to Sennacherib at Lachish, saying, I have offended (i. e. in renouncing his allegiance to Assyria), return from me, that which thou puttest on me I will bear; that Sennacherib accordingly imposed a tribute of three hundred talents of silver and thirty of gold, to pay which Hezekiah gave him all the treasures of the palace and the temple, not excepting the metallic decorations of the doors and pillars (2 Kings 18: 14-16). There is nothing, either in the case before us, or in the general analogy of Scripture, to forbid the supposition, that the narrative was intended to exhibit the weakness no less than the strength of Hezekiah's faith, in which case there is no need of laboriously vindicating all his acts as perfectly consistent with a strong and lively faith, although his general sincerity and godliness cannot be questioned. Another addition to the narrative is found in the second book of Chronicles (32: 1-8), where we read that Hezekiah, when he saw that Sennacherib was come, and that his face was towards Jerusalem for war, took measures to strengthen the defences of the city, and to cut off the supply of water from the enemy, while at the same time he encouraged the people to rely upon Jehovah and not to be afraid of the Assyrian host. All this is spoken of as having taken place before what is recorded in the next verse of the chapter now before us. If we suppose it to have followed Hezekiah's message to Sennacherib and payment of the tribute, the inference would seem to be that the invader, having received the money, still appeared disposed to march upon the Holy City, whereupon the king abandoned all hope of conciliation, and threw himself without reserve on the divine protection.

2 *And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem, to king Hezekiah, with a strong force, and he stood by the conduit (or aqueduct) of the upper pool, in the highway of the*

*fuller's field.* Besides Rabshakeh, the narrative in Kings mentions Tartan and Rabsaris; that in Chronicles uses the general expression *his servants*. Rabshakeh may be named alone here as the chief speaker, or as the commander of the expedition. The Jews have a tradition that he was a renegado or apostate Jew. Others account for his knowledge of Hebrew by supposing him to have acquired it by intercourse with captives of the ten tribes. Lachish was a town of Judah south-west of Jerusalem on the way to Egypt. This place Sennacherib was now besieging (2 Chron. 32:9), and being probably detained longer than he had expected, he detached a part of his forces to attack Jerusalem, or rather to summon Hezekiah to surrender. That the main body of the army afterwards advanced against Jerusalem is nowhere explicitly recorded, although some infer from ch. 10:28-32 that they did so, making a circuit to the north for the purpose of surprising the city. It is said in Chronicles that Sennacherib was now *before Lachish*, in the military sense, i. e. besieging it, *with all his force*, which some explain to mean *with a large part of it*, others *with his court* and the usual accompaniments of an eastern camp, in order to remove a supposed inconsistency with what is here said. But the phrase in Chronicles relates to the Assyrian force at Lachish before Rabshakeh was detached, and is inserted merely to explain the statement that he came *from Lachish*, because Sennacherib had halted there with all his army. The verb may also be referred to the halt of Rabshakeh's detachment, or to the position which they took up on arriving; but it is simpler to refer it to the spot on which Rabshakeh himself stood during the interview about to be described. The spot was doubtless one of great resort. For the localities here mentioned, see the notes on ch 7:3 and 22:9-11.

3. *Then came forth unto him Eliakim, Hilkiah's son, who was over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, Asaph's son, the*



*recorder.* The parallel narrative (2 Kings 18: 18) prefixes to this verse a statement that *he called to (or for) the king*, in answer to which summons these three ministers came out. Eliakim here appears as Shebna's successor, according to the prophecy in ch. 22: 20, and Shebna himself as an inferior office-bearer. Interpreters have amused themselves with trying to discover equivalents in modern parlance for these three official titles, such as chamberlain, steward, majordomo, secretary, master of requests, master of the rolls, historiographer, etc. It is enough to know that they probably denote three principal officers of state, or of the royal household, which in oriental governments is very much the same thing.

4. *And Rabshakeh said to them: Say now (or if you please) to Hezekiah, thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What is this confidence which thou confidest in?* He expresses his contempt by withholding the name of king from Hezekiah and calling his own master *the great king*, a common title of the Persian and other oriental monarchs, corresponding to *Grand Seignior*, *Grand Monarque*, and *Emperor*, as a distinctive royal title. The interrogation in the last clause implies surprise and scorn at a reliance so unfounded. *Confide* and *confidence* sustain the same etymological relation to each other as the Hebrew noun and verb.

5. *I say (or have said), only word of lips, counsel and strength for the war; now on whom hast thou confided, that thou hast rebelled against me?* The parallel passage in Kings has *thou hast said*, which Lowth assumes to be the true text here, while others treat the common reading as an error of the writer or abridger. The truth no doubt is that both the readings are original, since both may be so explained as to express the same idea. The simplest construction of what follows is: *I say, mere word of lips is (your) counsel and strength for the war, i.e. your pretended*

strength and wisdom are mere talk, false pretension. The allusion is not so much to Hezekiah's prayers as to his addresses to the people, recorded in 2 Chr. 32: 6-8. The sense of the other passage (2 Kings 18: 20) seems to be, *thou hast said* (to thyself, or thought, that) *mere talk is counsel and strength for the war*. The contemptuous import of *word of lips*, is apparent from Prov. 14: 23. The rebellion mentioned in the last clause is Hezekiah's casting off the Assyrian yoke (2 Kings 18: 7).

6. *Behold, thou hast trusted in the staff (or support) of this broken reed, in Egypt, which, (if) a man lean upon it, will go into his hand and pierce it; so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all those trusting in him.* He answers his own question. The charge of relying upon Egypt may be regarded either as a true one, or as a malicious fabrication, or as a mere inference from the analogy of other cases and the habitual relation of the parties. Egypt may be called a broken reed, either as being always weak, or in allusion to what it had already suffered from Assyria. *Broken* does not mean entirely divided, but so bruised or shattered as to yield no firm support but rather to do injury. (See ch. 42: 3 below.)

7. *And if thou say to me, we trust in Jehovah our God, is it not he whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and said to Judah and to Jerusalem, before this altar shall ye worship?* Rabshakeh's question evidently refers to Hezekiah's reformation of religious worship (2 Kings 18: 4), which he erroneously regarded as a change of the national religion.

8. *And now, engage, I pray thee, with my lord, the king of Assyria, and I will give thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them.* A contemptuous comparison between the Jews, who were almost destitute of cavalry, and the Assyrians, who were strong in that species of force (ch. 5: 23)

Whether the first verb refers to fight or to negotiation, must be determined by the context.

9. *And how wilt thou turn away the face of one governor (or satrap) of the least of my master's servants? So thou hast reposed thyself on Egypt, with respect to chariots and horses.* As a man is said to turn his face towards an object of attack, so the latter may be said to turn back (or away) the face of his assailant when he repels him. The last clause is an inference from the first, as the first is from the foregoing verse. If Hezekiah could not command two thousand horsemen, he was unprepared to resist even a detachment of the Assyrian force; and if thus helpless, he must be trusting, not in his own resources, but in foreign aid.

10. *And now (is it) without Jehovah I have come up against this land to destroy it? Jehovah said to me, go up to (or against) this land and destroy it.* This is a bold attempt to terrify the Jews by pleading the authority of their own tutelary deity for this invasion.

11. *Then said Eliakim and Shebna and Joah unto Rabshakeh, Pray speak unto thy servants in Aramean, for we understand (it), and speak not to us in Jewish, in the ears of the people who (are) on the wall.* This request implies an apprehension of the bad effect of his address upon the multitude. *Aramean* corresponds very nearly to *Syrian* in latitude of meaning; but the language meant is not what we call *Syriac*, but an older form, which was probably current, as the French is now, at the courts and among the educated classes of an extensive region. *Jewish* is *Hebreic*, so called by the Jews, as the language of the whole British empire is called *English*, or as German is sometimes called *Saxon*. The use of this term here is urged by some as a proof of later date than the time of Isaiah, on the ground that the

distinctive name *Jewish* could not have been common till long after the destruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes, which left Judah the only representative of Israel. But how long after this event may we assume that such a usage became common? The ten tribes were carried into exile by Sennacherib's father, if not by his grandfather. It is altogether probable that from the time of the great schism between Ephraim and Judah, the latter began to call the national language by its own distinctive name. At the period in question, such a designation was certainly more natural, in the mouths of Jews, than *Israelitish* or even *Hebrew*. *We understand*, literally, *we (are) hearing*, i. e. hearing distinctly and intelligently.

12. *And Rabshakeh said: Is it to thy master and to thee, that my master hath sent me to speak these words? Is it not to the men sitting on the wall to eat their own dung and to drink their own water with you?* The last clause is obviously descriptive of the horrors of famine in their most revolting form. The same idea is conveyed still more distinctly in Chronicles: *whereon do ye trust that ye abide in the fortress of Jerusalem? doth not Hezekiah persuade you to give over yourselves to die by famine and by thirst, saying, the Lord our God shall deliver us out of the hand of the king of Assyria?* (2 Chr. 32:10, 11). So here the people are described as sitting on the wall, i. e. holding out against Sennacherib, only that they may experience these horrors.

13. *And Rabshakeh stood and called with a loud voice in Jewish* (i. e. Hebrew), *and said, Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria.* In so doing he not only testified his contempt for the king's messengers by insolently disregarding their request, but made a politic appeal to the hopes and fears of the multitude. That *he stood and called*, is explained by some to mean that he assumed a higher position, or came nearer to the

wall; but the simplest and most natural explanation is, that he remained where he was before and merely raised his voice.

14. *Thus saith the king: let not Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you.* The repeated mention of the king reminds them, that he is not speaking in his own name, but in that of a great monarch. The parallel passage (2 Kings 18: 29) adds, *out of his hand.*

15. *And let not Hezekiah make you trust in Jehovah, saying, Jehovah will certainly save us, this city shall not be given up into the hand of the king of Assyria.* The idea of certain deliverance is expressed by the idiomatic combination of the future and infinitive.

16. *Hearken not to Hezekiah, for thus saith the king of Assyria, make with me a blessing, and come out unto me, and eat ye (every) man his own vine and (every) man his own fig-tree, and drink ye (every) man the waters of his own cistern.* Some explain the phrase here used, *make me a present, or make an agreement with me by a present.* It is possible, however, to adhere more closely to the usage of the term, by taking *blessing* in the sense of friendly salutation, which in the east is commonly an invocation of the divine blessing. Thus the verb *to bless* is often used to express the act of greeting or of taking leave. To make a blessing with one then might mean to enter into amicable intercourse. To *come out* is in Hebrew the common military phrase for the surrender of a besieged town. The inducements offered in the last clause are in obvious antithesis to the revolting threat or warning in the last clause of v. 12. To eat the vine and fig-tree (meaning to eat their fruit) is an elliptical form of speech, which has its analogies in every language.

17. *Until I come and take you away to a land like your own*

*land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards.* The parallel passage (2 Kings 18:32) adds, *a land of oil-olive and honey, that ye may live and not die.* This reference to the deportation of the people as a future event has led some interpreters to the conclusion, that Sennacherib was now on his way to Egypt, and deferred the measure until his return. It has been disputed what particular land is here meant, some saying Mesopotamia, to which others object that it was not a wine-growing country. But there is no need of supposing that the Assyrian's description was exactly true. He may indeed have intended merely to promise them in general a country as abundant as their own.

18. *Let not. (or beware lest) Hezekiah seduce you, saying, Jehovah will deliver us. Have the gods of the nations delivered every one his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?* The Assyrian here, with characteristic recklessness, forsakes his previous position, that he was but acting as Jehovah's instrument, and sets himself in disdainful opposition to Jehovah himself.

19. *Where (are) the gods of Hamath and Arpad? where the gods of Sepharvaim? and (when or where was it) that they delivered Samaria out of my hand?* In the rapidity of his triumphant interrogation, he expresses himself darkly and imperfectly. The last clause must of course refer to the gods of Samaria, though not expressly mentioned. For the situation of Hamath and Arpad, see the note on ch. 10:9. Sepharvaim is probably the *Sipphara* of Ptolemy, a town and province in the south of Mesopotamia, already subject to Assyria in the days of Shalmaneser. The parallel passage (2 Kings 18:34) adds *Hena* and *Ierah*, which are also named with Sepharvaim in 2 Kings 19:13 and Isai. 37:13. The question (*where are they?*) seems to imply, not only that they had not saved their worshippers, but that they had ceased to be.



20. *Who (are they) among all the gods of these lands, that have delivered their land out of my hand, that Jehovah should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?* In this argumentative interrogation, he puts Jehovah on a level with the gods of the surrounding nations. This is still more frequently and pointedly expressed in the parallel passage in Chronicles. *Know ye not what I and my fathers have done unto all the nations of the countries? Were the gods of the nations of the countries able to deliver their country out of my hand? Who was there among all the gods of these nations, which my fathers utterly destroyed, that was able to deliver his people out of my hand, that your God should be able to deliver you out of my hand? And now, let not Hezekiah deceive you, and let him not seduce you, neither believe him; for no god of any nation or kingdom has been able to deliver his people out of my hand, and out of the hand of my fathers; how much less shall your God deliver you out of my hand.* (2 Chron. 32: 13-15.) From the same authority we learn that over and above what is recorded, Sennacherib's servants *spake still more against the God Jehovah and against Hezekiah his servant* (v. 16), and that *they cried with a loud voice in the Jewish language, to the people of Jerusalem who were on the wall, to affright them, and to trouble them, that they might take the city; and they spake against the God of Jerusalem as against the gods of the nations of the earth, the work of man's hands* (vs. 18, 19.)

21, 22. *And they held their peace, and did not answer him a word, for such was the commandment of the king, saying, Ye shall not answer him. Then came Eliakim, Hilkiab's son, who (was) over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, Asaph's son, the recorder, unto Hezekiah, with their clothes rent* (literally, *rent of clothes*), *and told him the words of Rabshakeh.* Some of the older writers understand the rending of their garments as a mere sign of their horror at Rabshakeh's blasphemies: some of the moderns as a mere sign of despondency and alarm at the impending dangers: whereas both may naturally be included.



## CHAPTER XXXVII.

THIS chapter is a direct continuation of the one before it. It describes the effect of Rabshakeh's blasphemies and threats on Hezekiah, his humiliation, his message to Isaiah, and the answer, the retreat of Rabshakeh, Sennacherib's letter, Hezekiah's prayer, Isaiah's prophecy, and its fulfilment, in the slaughter of Sennacherib's army and his own flight and murder.

1. *And it was (or came to pass), when King Hezekiah heard (the report of his messengers), that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of Jehovah.* He resorted to the temple, not only as a public place, but with reference to the promise made to Solomon (1 Kings 8: 29), that God would hear the prayers of his people from that place when they were in distress. Under the old dispensation there were reasons for resorting to the temple, even to offer private supplications, which cannot possibly apply to any church or other place at present. This arose partly from the fact that prayer was connected with sacrifice, and this was rigidly confined to one spot.

2. *And he sent Eliakim who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, unto Isaiah, the son of Amoz, the prophet.* While he himself resorted to the temple, he sent to ask the counsel and the intercessions of the Prophet. Eliakim and Shebna are again employed in this case, as being qualified to make an exact report of what had happened, and in order to put honour on the prophet by an embassy of distinguished men. In the place of Joah, he sends the elders of the priests, i. e. the heads of the sacerdotal families. The king applies to the prophet as the authorized expounder of the will of God. Similar applications are recorded elsewhere

with sufficient frequency to show that they were customary and that the prophets were regarded in this light. Thus Josiah sent to Huldah (2 Kings 22 : 14), Zedekiah to Jeremiah (Jer. 37 : 3), etc. The impious Ahab required Micaiah to come to him, and that only at the earnest request of King Jehoshaphat (1 Kings 22 : 9). Of the king's prompt appeal to God in his extremity, Gill quaintly says: "Hezekiah does not sit down to consider Rabshakeh's speech, to take it in pieces, and give an answer to it, but he applies unto God."

3. *And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, A day of anguish and rebuke and contempt (is) this day, for the children are come to the birth (or to the place of birth), and there is not strength to bring forth.* As the execution of a command is often left to be inferred from the command itself (ch. 7 : 3 8 : 1, etc.), so here the details of the command are to be gathered from the record of its execution. The common version *trouble*, seems too weak for the occasion and for the figure in the other clause. It denotes, not external danger merely, but the complicated distress, both of a temporal and spiritual nature, in which Hezekiah was involved by the threats and blasphemies of the Assyrian. *Rebuke* signifies the divine rebuke or chastisement, as in Ps. 73 : 14. 149 : 7. It is characteristic of the Scriptures and the ancient saints to represent even the malignity of human enemies as a rebuke from God. The very same phrase (*day of rebuke*) is used in the same sense by Hosea (5 : 9). The metaphor in the last clause expresses, in the most affecting manner, the ideas of extreme pain, imminent danger, critical emergency, utter weakness, and entire dependence on the aid of others. (Compare the similar expressions of ch. 26 : 18.)

4. *If peradventure Jehovah thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God, and will rebuke the words which Jehovah thy God*

*hath heard, then shalt thou lift up a prayer for the remnant (that is still) found (here).* It was because Hezekiah thought Jehovah might hear, that he asked Isaiah's prayers in his behalf. The reproach and blasphemy of the Assyrian consisted mainly in his confounding Jehovah with the gods of the surrounding nations (2 Chron. 32:19), in antithesis to whom, as being impotent and lifeless, he is here and elsewhere called the *living God*. *To lift up a prayer* is not simply to utter one, but has allusion to two common idiomatic phrases, that of lifting up the voice, in the sense of speaking loud or beginning to speak, and that of lifting up the heart or soul, in the sense of earnestly desiring. The passive participle *found* is often used in Hebrew to denote what is *present* in a certain place, or more generally what is *extant*, in existence, or forthcoming. The meaning *left*, which is expressed in the English version, is suggested wholly by the noun with which the participle here agrees. As to the application of the whole phrase, it may either be a general description of the straits or low condition to which the chosen people were reduced (as the church at Sardis is exhorted to *strengthen the things which remain*, Rev. 3:2), or be more specifically understood in reference to Judah as surviving the destruction of the ten tribes (compare ch. 28:5), or to Jerusalem as spared amidst the general desolation of Judah (compare ch. 1:8). In either case, the king requests the prophet to pray for their deliverance from entire destruction. This application was made to Isaiah, not as a private person, however eminent in piety, but as one who was recognized as standing in an intimate relation to Jehovah, and as a constituted medium of communication with him. In like manner God himself said to Abimelech of Abraham: *he is a prophet, and shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live* (Gen. 20:7). In recognition of this same relation, Hezekiah twice says *thy God*, i. e. thine in a peculiar and distinctive sense. This phrase is, therefore, not to be regarded as an expression of despondency, nor even of humility

on Hezekiah's part, but as a kind of indirect explanation of his reason for resorting to the Prophet at this juncture.

5. *And the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah.* This is a natural and simple resumption of the narrative, common in all inartificial history.

6. *And Isaiah said to them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith Jehovah, Be not afraid of (literally from before or from the face of) the words which thou hast heard, (with) which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me.* The last verb means to rail at or revile, and when applied to God must be translated by a still stronger term. The word translated *servants* is not the same with that in the preceding verse, but strictly means *young men* or *boys*. Many regard it as a contemptuous description.

7. *Behold I am putting (or about to put) a spirit in him, and he shall hear a noise, and shall return to his own land, and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.* The English Version renders the first clause, *behold I will send a blast upon him*, meaning either a pestilential blast or a destructive tempest. But the phrase refers to an effect to be produced upon the mind of the Assyrian. The most probable conclusion is, that it does not denote a specific change, but divine influence as governing his movements. Most writers understand the phrase, *he shall hear a noise*, as referring to the news mentioned in v. 9 below. But as this news, far from driving Sennacherib home, led to a fresh defiance of Jerusalem, it has been ingeniously suggested that this expression has reference to the news of the destruction of his host before Jerusalem while he himself was absent. But in the next verse Rabshakeh is said to have rejoined his master, nor is there any further mention of an army at Jerusalem. It is possible, indeed, though not recorded, that Rabshakeh left

the troops behind him when he went to Libnah, under the command of Tartan or Rabсарis (2 Kings 18: 17), and this is still more probable if, as some suppose, Rabshakeh was a mere ambassador or herald, and Tartan the real military chief. If it can be assumed, on any ground, that the great catastrophe took place in the absence of Sennacherib, which would account for his personal escape, then the explanation given above is more satisfactory than any other.

8 *And Rabshakeh returned and found the king of Assyria fighting against (i. e. besieging) Libnah, for he heard that he had decamped from Lachish.* Both these towns were in the plain or lowlands of Judah south-west of Jerusalem (Josh. 15: 39, 42), originally seats of Canaanitish kings or chiefs, conquered by Joshua (Josh. 12: 11, 15). Lachish was one of the fifteen places fortified by Rehoboam (2 Chron. 11: 9), and one of the last towns taken by Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 34: 7). It was still in existence after the exile (Neh. 11: 30). Libnah was a city of the Levites and of refuge (Josh. 21: 13), and appears to have been nearer to Jerusalem. The last verb in this verse properly denotes the removal of a tent or an encampment.

9. *And he (Sennacherib) heard say concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, He is come forth to make war with thee; and he heard (it) and sent (or when he heard it he sent) messengers to Hezekiah, saying (what follows in the next verse)* For the meaning of the Hebrew name *Cush*, see the notes on ch. 18: 1 and 20: 3. Tirhakah was one of the most famous conquerors of ancient times. Magasthenes, as quoted by Strabo, puts him between Sesostris and Nebuchadnezzar. He is also named by Manetho as one of the Ethiopian dynasty in Egypt. He was at this time either in close alliance with that country, or more probably in actual possession of Thebais or Upper Egypt. The fact that an Ethiopian dynasty did reign there, is attested by the ancient

writers, and confirmed by still existing monuments. The Greek forms of the name (*Ταρχαζός, Τάρχος, Τέρχων*) vary but little from the Hebrew. It is unnecessary to suppose that Tirhakah had crossed the desert to invade Syria, or that he was already on the frontier of Judah. The bare fact of his having left his own dominions, with the purpose of attacking Sennacherib, would be sufficient to alarm the latter, especially as his operations in the Holy Land had been so unsuccessful. He was naturally anxious therefore to induce Hezekiah to capitulate before the Ethiopians should arrive, perhaps before the Jews should hear of their approach. That he did not march upon Jerusalem himself, is very probably accounted for on the ground that his strength lay chiefly in cavalry, which could not be employed in the highlands, and that the poliorcetic part of warfare was little known to any ancient nation but the Romans, as Tacitus explicitly asserts. To this may be added the peculiar difficulty arising from the scarcity of water in the environs of Jerusalem, which has been an obstacle to all the armies that have ever besieged it. (See the notes on ch. 22: 9-11.)

10. *Thus shall ye say to Hezekiah, king of Judah, Let not thy God deceive thee, in whom thou trustest, saying, Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.* This recognition of Hezekiah's royal dignity, of which Rabshakeh seemed to take no notice, if significant at all, as some interpreters imagine, may be accounted for upon the ground, that in this message the design of the Assyrian was not to destroy the people's confidence in Hezekiah, but the king's own confidence in God. For the same reason, Sennacherib's blasphemy is much more open and direct than that of Rabshakeh. The word *saying* may be referred either to Hezekiah or to God. The English Version makes the last construction necessary, by changing the collocation of the words; but many others understand the sense to be, *in whom thou trustest, saying*. On the whole, it is best, in a case



so doubtful, to retain the Hebrew collocation with all its ambiguity.

11. *Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the lands, by utterly destroying them, and thou shalt be delivered!* The interjection *behold* appeals to these events as something perfectly notorious; as if he had said, see what has happened to others, and then judge whether thou art likely to escape. The pronoun *thou*, in the first clause, not being necessary to the sense, is, according to analogy, distinctive and emphatic, and may be explained to mean, *thou at least* hast heard, if not the common people. In the last clause, the same pronoun stands in opposition to the other kings or kingdoms who had been destroyed. This clause is, in most versions, rendered as an interrogation, but is properly an exclamation of contemptuous incredulity. *All the lands* may be either an elliptical expression for *all the lands subdued by them*, or, which is more in keeping with the character of the discourse, a hyperbolical expression of the speaker's arrogance.

12. *Did the gods of the nations deliver them, which my fathers destroyed, (to wit) Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which is (or who were) in Telassar?* Here again the collocation of the words makes the construction doubtful, though the general sense is clear. With respect to the places mentioned in the second clause, all that is absolutely necessary to the just understanding of the sentence, is that they were well known, both to speaker and hearer, as Assyrian conquests. The difficulty of identifying some of them affords an incidental argument in favour of the antiquity and genuineness of the passage. *Gozan* is probably the modern *Kaushan*, the *Gauzanitis* of Ptolemy, a region of Mesopotamia, situated on the Chaboras, to which a portion of the ten tribes were transferred by Shalmaneser. *Haran* was a city of Mesopotamia, where Abraham's



father died, the *Carrae* of the Romans, and famous for the great defeat of Crassus. *Rezepth*, a common name in oriental geography, here denotes probably the *Rhessapha* of Ptolemy, a town and province in Palmyrene Syria. *Eden* means pleasure or delight, and seems to have been given as a name to various places. Having been thus applied to a district in the region of Mount Lebanon the native Christians have been led to regard that as the site of the terrestrial paradise. Equally groundless are the conclusions of some learned critics as to the identity of the place here mentioned with the garden of Eden. Such allusions prove no more, as to the site of the garden, than the similar allusions of modern orators and poets to any delightful region as *an Eden* or *Paradise*. Even the continued application of the name, in prose, as a geographical term, proves no more than the use of such a name as *Mount Pleasant* in American geography. The inference, in this place, is especially untenable, because the word *sons* or *children*, prefixed to Eden, leaves it doubtful whether the latter is the name of a place at all, and not rather that of a person, whose descendants were among the races conquered by Assyria. The relative pronoun may agree grammatically either with *sons* or *Eden*, and the form of the verb to be supplied must be varied accordingly. *Telassar*, which some think may be identical with the *Ellasar* of Gen. 14:1, appears to be analogous in form to the Babylonian names, *Tel-abib*, *Telmelah*, *Tel-hasha*, in all which *tel* means *hill* and corresponds to the English *mount* in names of places.

13. *Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city Sepharvaim, Hena and Irvah?* The question implies that they were nowhere, or had ceased to be. The first three names occur in the same order in Rabshakeh's speech (ch. 36:19), and the remaining two also in the parallel passage (2 Kings 18:34). Of Hena nothing whatever is known, and of Irvah only that it may be identical with the *Arva* of 2 Kings

17 24, from which Assyrian colonists were transferred to Samaria. It has been suggested that they are the names of the deities worshipped at Hamath, Arpad, and Sepharvaim. In favour of this exposition, besides the fact that the names, as names of places, occur nowhere else, it may be urged that it agrees not only with the context in this place, but also with 2 Kings 18: 34.

14. *And Hezekiah took the letters from the hand of the messengers, and read it, and went up (to) the house of Jehovah, and Hezekiah spread it before Jehovah.* As nothing had been previously said respecting letters, we must either suppose that the preceding address was made not orally but in writing, or that both modes of communication were adopted. The latter is most probable in itself, and agrees best with the statement in 2 Chr. 32: 17, that besides the speeches which his servants spake against the Lord God and against his servant Hezekiah, Sennacherib *wrote letters to rail on the Lord God of Israel and to speak against him.* The singular pronoun (*it*) refers to the plural antecedent (*letters*), which like the Latin *literae* had come to signify a single letter, and might be therefore treated indiscriminately either as a singular or plural form. The parallel passage (2 Kings 19: 14) removes all appearance of irregularity by reading *them* instead of *it*. As any man might carry an open letter, which troubled or perplexed him, to a friend for sympathy and counsel, so the pious king spreads this blasphemous epistle before God, as the occasion and the subject of his prayers. Josephus says he left it afterwards rolled up in the temple, of which fact there is no record in the narrative before us

5. *And Hezekiah prayed to Jehovah, saying* (what follows in the next verse). Gill quaintly says that, instead of answering the letter himself, he prays the Lord to answer it. Instead of *to*, the parallel passage (2 Kings 19: 15) has *before Jehovah*.

16. *Jehovah of Hosts, God of Israel, dwelling between (or sitting upon) the cherubim, thou art he, the God (i. e. the only true God), thou alone, to all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made the heavens and the earth.* The *cherubim* were symbolical representations of the superhuman orders of beings, or, as some suppose, of the perfection of the creature in its highest form. Whether Jehovah's riding on the cherubim (Ps. 18 : 10) or his being enthroned above the material cherubs in the temple, or his *dwelling between* the cherubim (Ex. 25 : 22), be specifically meant, there is obvious allusion to his manifested presence over the mercy-seat, called by the later Jews *shechinah*, which word is itself used in the Chaldee Paraphrase of the verse before us. *The God of all the kingdoms of the earth* is not an exact translation of the Hebrew words, in which *the God* stands by itself as an emphatic phrase, meaning *the only God, the true God*, and what follows is intended to suggest a contrast with the false gods of the nations. Not simply *of all, in all, for all, or over all*, but *with respect to all*. Thou art the one true God, not only with respect to us, but with respect to all the nations of the earth. The reason follows: because thou hast made them all, and not the earth only, but the heavens also. All this is indirectly a reply to the Assyrian blasphemies, which questioned the almighty power of Jehovah, and put him on a level with the idols of the heathen. The same antithesis between the impotence of idols and the power of God, as shown in the creation of the world, occurs in Ps. 96 : 5 and Jer. 10 : 11.

17. *Bow thine ear, O Jehovah, and hear; open thine eyes, O Jehovah, and see; and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which he hath sent (or who hath sent) to reproach the living God.* These expressions are entirely analogous to those in many other places, where God is entreated to see and hear, i. e. to act as if he saw and heard. The simplest version is, *who has sent*. To express the idea, *which he has sent*, usage would seem to require a per-

sonal pronoun with the verb, as in 2 Kings 19: 16, where the relative may refer to the plural *words*, or to Rabshakeh, which last is the construction given in the English Version of that passage.

18. *It is true, O Jehovah, the kings of Assyria have wasted all the lands and their land.* The first word in the original is a particle of concession, admitting the truth of what Sennacherib had said, so far as it related merely to his conquest of the nations and destruction of their idols. The repetition, *lands* and *land*, has much perplexed interpreters. The best construction is that which brings the sentence into strict agreement, not as to form but as to sense, with the parallel passage (2 Kings 19: 17), where we have the unambiguous term *nations*.

19. *And given (or put) their gods into the fire—for they (were) no gods, but wood and stone, the work of men's hands—and destroyed them.* The application of the word *gods* to the mere external image is common in profane as well as sacred writings, and arises from the fact that all idolaters, whatever they may theoretically hold as to the nature of their deities, identify them practically with the stocks and stones to which they pay their adorations.

20. *And now, oh Jehovah our God, save us from his hand, and all the kingdoms of the earth shall know, that thou Jehovah art alone (or that thou alone art Jehovah).* The adverb *now* is here used both in a temporal and logical sense, as equivalent, not only to *at length*, or *before it is too late*, but also to *therefore*, or *since these things are so*. The fact that Sennacherib had destroyed other nations, is urged as a reason why the Lord should interpose to rescue his own people from a like destruction; and the fact that he had really triumphed over other gods, as a reason why he should be taught to know the difference between *them*

and Jehovah The construction of the verb as an optative (*let all the kingdoms of the earth know*), or a subjunctive (*that all the kingdoms of the earth may know*), although admissible, ought not to be preferred to the future proper, where the latter yields a sense so good in itself and so well suited to the context. The last words of the verse may either mean, *that thou Jehovah art the only one* (i. e. as appears from the connection, the only true God), or, *that thou alone art Jehovah*, with particular allusion to the proper import of that name as signifying absolute, eternal, independent existence. The first is recommended by its more exact agreement with the masoretic accents. These questions of construction do not affect the general sense, which is, that the deliverance of his people from Sennacherib would prove Jehovah to be infinitely more than the gods of the nations whom he gloried in destroying.

21. *And Isaiah, the son of Amoz, sent to Hezekiah saying, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, (as to) what thou hast prayed to me (with respect) to Sennacherib king of Assyria* (the apodosis follows in the next verse). The supposition that the communication was in writing, is favoured by the analogy of v. 14, and by the length and metrical form of the message itself.

22. *This is the word which Jehovah hath spoken concerning (or against) him. The virgin daughter of Zion hath despised thee, she hath laughed thee to scorn, the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head after thee.* The simple meaning is that what follows is a revelation from God in answer to the vaunting of Sennacherib and the prayers of Hezekiah. For the meaning of the phrase *daughter of Zion*, see the note on ch. 1 : 8 ; for the construction of *virgin*, that on ch. 23 : 12. *The virgin daughter Zion*, i. e. Zion considered as a daughter and a virgin. It may be a personification either of the whole church and nation, or of the city of Jerusalem, which last seems more appropriate in this connection.

Not merely *at thee*, but *after thee* as thou fleest. Some understand by *shaking* a derisive nodding or vertical motion of the head accompanied by laughter. Others suppose that a wagging or lateral motion of the head, although not used by us for such a purpose, may have been common as a gesture of derision in the east, the rather as such signs are to a great extent conventional, and as other derisive gestures mentioned in the Scriptures are equally foreign from our habits and associations. Others again suppose that the shaking of the head, with the Hebrews as with us, was a gesture of negation, and that the expression of scorn consisted in a tacit denial that Sennacherib had been able to effect his purpose. Thus understood, the action is equivalent to saying in words, *no, no!* i. e. he could not do it. See my note on Psalm 22:8. The meaning of the whole verse, divested of its figurative dress, is that the people of God might regard the threats of the Assyrian with contempt.

23. *Whom hast thou reproached and reviled, and against whom hast thou raised (thy) voice, and lifted thine eyes (on) high towards (or against) the Holy One of Israel?* This is equivalent to saying, dost thou know who it is that thou revilest? To raise the voice may simply mean to speak, or more emphatically to speak boldly, perhaps with an allusion to the literal loudness of Rabshakeh's address to the people on the wall (ch. 36:13). The construction *loftiness of eyes* (meaning *pride*) is inconsistent both with the pointing and accentuation. The English and many other versions make the last words of the second clause an answer to the foregoing question. (*Against whom? Against the Holy One of Israel.*) But the other construction is more natural.

24. *By the hand of thy servants hast thou reproached the Lord and said, With the multitude of my chariots (or cavalry) I have ascended the height of mountains, the sides of Lebanon, and I will*



*cut down the loftiness of its cedars and the choice of its firs (or cypresses), and I will reach its extreme height (literally, the height of its extremity), its garden-forest (literally, the garden of its forest).* This may be regarded either as the substance of another message actually sent by Sennacherib, or as a translation of his feelings and his conduct into words. *By the hand* may then mean simply *through* (as in ch. 20: 1), or refer particularly to the letters mentioned in v. 14. The *fruitful field, vineyard, garden, orchard*, or the like, is here combined with *forest*, either for the purpose of describing the cedar groves of Lebanon as similar to parks and orchards, or of designating the spot where the cultivated slope of the mountain is gradually changed into a forest. It was long supposed that the only cedar grove of Lebanon was the one usually visited near the highest summit of the range; but in 1805, Seetzen discovered two others of greater extent, and the American missionaries have since found many trees in different parts of the mountain. (See Robinson's Palestine, III. 440.) If we take into consideration the whole context, and the strongly hyperbolical expressions of the other messages and speeches of Sennacherib, it will be found most natural to understand this verse as a poetical assertion of the speaker's power to overcome all obstacles.

25. *I have digged and drunk water, and I will dry up with the sole of my feet (literally, steps) all the streams of Egypt.* As in the preceding verse, he begins with the past tense and then changes to the future, to denote that he had begun his enterprise successfully and expected to conclude it triumphantly. The confusion of the tenses, as all futures or all preterites, is entirely arbitrary, and the translation of them all as presents is at least unnecessary, when a strieter version not only yields a good sense, but adds to the significance and force of the expressions. The best interpretation, on the whole, is that which understands the verse to mean that no difficulties or privations



could retard his march, that where there was no water he had dug for it and found it, and that where there was he would exhaust it, both assertions implying a vast multitude of soldiers. The drying up of the rivers with the soles of the feet is understood by some as an allusion to the Egyptian mode of drawing water with a tread-wheel (Deut. 11 : 10). Others suppose it to mean, that they would cross the streams dry-shod, or that the dust raised by their march would choke and dry up rivers. In favour of supposing an allusion to the drawing out of water, is the obvious reference to digging and drinking in the other clause.

26. *Hast thou not heard? From afar I have done it, from the days of old, and have formed it. Now I have caused it to come, and it shall be (or come to pass), to lay waste, (as or into) desolate heaps, fortified cities.* Most writers, ancient and modern, are agreed in applying the first clause, either to express predictions, or to the purpose and decree of God. The sense is then substantially the same with that of ch. 10 : 5, 15, to wit, that the Assyrian had wrought these conquests only as an instrument in the hand of God, who had formed and declared his purpose long before, and was now bringing it to pass. *Hast thou not heard?* may either be a reference to history and prophecy, or a more general expression of surprise that he could be ignorant of what was so notorious.

27. *And their inhabitants are short of hand; they are broken and confounded; they are grass of the field and green herbage, grass of the house-tops, and a field before the stalk (or standing corn), i. e. before the grain has grown up.* This may be regarded either as a description of the weakness of those whom the Assyrian had subdued, or as a description of the terror with which they were inspired at his approach. In the former case this verse extenuates the glory of his conquest; in the latter it enhances it. A short hand or arm implies inability to reach the

object, but does not necessarily suggest the idea of mutilation. In a negative sense, it is applied to God, Num. 11 : 23. Isai. 50 : 2. 59 : 1. The general meaning of the whole verse evidently is that they were unable to resist him.

28. *And thy sitting down, and thy going out, and thy coming in, I have known, and thy raging (or provoking of thyself) against me.* These phrases are combined to signify all the actions of his life, like *sitting down* and *rising up* in Ps. 139 : 2, *going out* and *coming in*, Deut. 28 : 6, 1 Kings 3 : 7, and elsewhere, the latter especially in reference to military movements (1 Sam. 18 : 16. 2 Sam. 5 : 2).

29. *Because of thy raging against me, and (because) thy arrogance has come up into my ears, I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will cause thee to return by the way by which thou camest.* The figures in the last clause are drawn from the customary method of controlling horses, and from a less familiar mode of treating buffaloes and other wild animals, still practised in the east and in menageries. (Compare Ezek. 19 : 4. 29 : 4. 38 : 4. Job 41 : 1.) The figure may be taken in a general sense as signifying failure and defeat, or more specifically as referring to Sennacherib's hasty flight.

30. *And this to thee (oh Hezekiah, shall be) the sign (of the fulfilment of the promise): eat, the (present) year, that which groweth of itself, and the second year that which springeth of the same, and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof.* The preceding verse closes the address to the Assyrian, begun in v. 22, and the Prophet now continues his message to Hezekiah. As to the general meaning of the verse, there are two opinions. One is that although the cultivation of the land had been interrupted for the last two years, yet now in this third year they might safely resume it. To this

interpretation it may be objected, that it arbitrarily makes *the year* mean the year before the last, and no less arbitrarily assumes that the infinitive is here used for the preterite. The later writers seem to have gone back to the old and obvious interpretation, which refers the whole verse to the future. This is grammatically more exact, because it takes *the year* in a sense analogous to that of *the day*, the common Hebrew phrase for *this day*, and assimilates the infinitive to the imperatives which follow. Thus understood, the verse is a prediction that for two years the people should subsist upon the secondary fruits of what was sown two years before, but that in the third year they should till the ground, as usual, implying that Sennacherib's invasion should before that time be at an end. But why should this event be represented as so distant, when the context seems to speak of Sennacherib's discomfiture and flight as something which immediately ensued? Of this two explanations have been given. Most probably the year in which these words were uttered was a sabbatical year, and the next the year of Jubilee, during neither of which the Jews were allowed to cultivate the ground, so that the resumption of tillage was of course postponed to the third. It is no conclusive objection to this theory, that the chronological hypothesis which it involves cannot be positively proved. The difficulty in all such cases arises from the very absence of positive proof, and the necessity of choosing between different possibilities. The only remaining question is, wherein the sign consisted, or in what sense the word *sign* is to be understood. Some take it in its strongest sense of *miracle* and refer it, either to the usual divine interposition for the subsistence of the people during the sabbatical years, or to the miraculous provision promised in this particular case. Others understand it here as simply meaning an event inseparable from another, either as an antecedent or a consequent, so that the promise of the one is really a pledge of the other. Thus the promise that the children of Israel should worship at Mount

Sinai was a *sign* to Moses that they should first leave Egypt, and the promised birth of the Messiah was a *sign* that the Jewish nation should continue till he came.

31. *And the escaped (literally the escape) of Judah, that is left, shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward.* This verse foretells, by a familiar figure, the returning prosperity of Judah. For the peculiar use of the abstract noun *escape*, see above, ch. 4:2. 10:20. 15:9.

32. *For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and an escape from Mount Zion; the zeal of Jehovah of Hosts shall do this.* For the meaning of the last clause, see the commentary on ch. 9:7. The first clause is an explanation of the use of the words *escape* and *left* in the foregoing verse. The verse denotes simply that some in Jerusalem or Zion shall be saved.

33. *Therefore (because Jehovah has determined to fulfil these promises), thus saith Jehovah (with respect) to the king of Assyria, he shall not come to this city, and shall not shoot an arrow there, and shall not come before it with a shield (or a shield shall not come before it), and shall not cast up a mound against it.* Some understand this as meaning simply that he should not take the city, others that he should not even attack it. This verse seems to show that Jerusalem was not actually besieged by the Assyrians, or at least not by the main body of the army under Sennacherib himself, unless we assume that he had already done so and retreated, and regard this as a promise that the attempt should not be repeated.

34. *By the way that he came shall he return, and to this city shall he not come, saith Jehovah.* The first clause may simply mean that he shall go back whence he came, or more specifically,

that he shall retreat without turning aside to attack Jerusalem, either for the first or second time.

35. *And I will cover over (or protect) this city, (so as) to save it, for my own sake, and for the sake of David my servant.* This does not mean that the faith or piety of David, as an individual, should be rewarded in his descendants, but that the promise made to him, respecting his successors, and especially the last and greatest of them, should be faithfully performed. (See 2 Sam. 7 : 12, 13.)

36. *And the angel of Jehovah went forth, and smote in the camp of Assyria an hundred and eighty and five thousand, and they (the survivors, or the Jews) rose early in the morning, and behold, all of them (that were smitten) were dead corpses.* Even if we give the phrase *angel of the Lord* its usual sense, "there is no more improbability in the existence of a good angel than there is in the existence of a good man, or in the existence of an evil spirit than there is in the existence of a bad man; there is no more improbability in the supposition that God employs invisible and heavenly messengers to accomplish his purposes than there is that he employs men." (Barnes.) The terms used can naturally signify nothing but a single instantaneous stroke of divine vengeance, and the parallel passage (2 Kings 19 : 35) says expressly that the angel smote this number *in that night*. The parallel narrative in 2 Chr. 32 : 21, instead of numbering the slain, says that all the mighty men of valour and the leaders and the captains in the camp of the Assyrian were cut off. Where this terrific overthrow took place, whether before Jerusalem, or at Libnah, or at some intervening point, has been disputed, and can never be determined, in the absence of all data, monumental or historical. Throughout the sacred narrative, it seems to be intentionally left uncertain, whether Jerusalem was besieged at all, whether Sennache-

rib in person ever came before it, whether his army was divided or united when the stroke befell them, and also what proportion of the host escaped. It is enough to know that one hundred and eighty-five thousand men perished in a single night.

37. *Then decamped and departed and returned Sennacherib, king of Assyria, and dwelt (or remained) in Nineveh.* The form of expression in the first clause is thought by some writers to resemble Cicero's famous description of Catiline's escape (*abiit, excessit, evasit, erupit*), the rapid succession of the verbs suggesting the idea of confused and sudden flight. His dwelling in Nineveh is supposed by some interpreters to be mentioned as implying that he went forth no more to war, at least not against the Jews. An old tradition says that he lived only fifty days after his return; but according to other chronological hypotheses, he reigned eighteen years longer, and during that interval waged war successively against the Greeks and founded Tarsus in Cilicia.

38. *And he was worshipping (in) the house of Nisroch his god, and Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword, and they escaped (literally, saved themselves) into the land of Ararat, and Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.* The Jews have a tradition that Sennacherib intended to sacrifice his sons, and that they slew him in self-defence. Another tradition is, that he had fled into the temple of his god as an asylum. A simpler supposition is, that the time of his devotions was chosen by his murderers, as one when he would be least guarded or suspicious. The name *Adrammelech* occurs in 2 Kings 17:31, as that of a Mesopotamian or Assyrian idol. *Ararat*, both here and in Gen. 8:4, is the name of a region, corresponding more or less exactly to *Armenia*, or to that part of it in which the ark rested. The Armenians still call their country by this name. From the expression *mountains of Ararat* (Gen. 8:4) has sprung the



modern practice of applying this name to the particular eminence where Noah landed. The country of Ararat is described by Smith and Dwight, in their *Researches in Armenia*, vol. II. pp. 73, etc.

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## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THIS chapter contains an account of Hezekiah's illness and miraculous recovery, together with a Psalm which he composed in commemoration of his sufferings and deliverance. The parallel passage (2 Kings 20 : 1-11) varies more from that before us than in the preceding chapter. So far as they are parallel, the narrative in Kings is more minute and circumstantial, and at the same time more exactly chronological in its arrangement. On the other hand, the Psalm is wholly wanting in that passage. All these circumstances favour the conclusion that the text before us is the first draught, and the other a repetition by the hand of the same writer.

1. *In those days Hezekiah was sick unto death, and Isaiah, the son of Amoz, the Prophet, came to him, and said to him, Thus saith Jehovah, Order thy house, for thou (art) dying, and art not to live.* As Hezekiah survived this sickness fifteen years (v. 5), and reigned in all twenty-nine (2 Kings 18 : 2), *those days* must be restricted to the fourteenth year, which was that of the Assyrian invasion. Whether this sickness was before the great catastrophe or after it, is not a question of much exegetical importance. In favour of the former supposition is the promise in v. 6, according to its simplest and most obvious meaning, though it certainly admits of a wider application. It is also favoured by the ab-



sence of allusions to the slaughter of Sennacherib's host in the song of Hezekiah. But on the other hand, his prayer is only for recovery from sickness, without any reference to siege or invasion. It has been objected to the hypothesis which makes the sickness previous in date to the destruction of the host, that it would not have been omitted in its proper place. It is altogether natural, however, that the Prophet, after carrying the history of Sennacherib to its conclusion, should go back to complete that of Hezekiah also. *Order thy house* is ambiguous, both in Hebrew and in English. The sense may be, give orders with respect to thy house; or, command thy household, i. e. make known to them thy last will. In either case, the general idea is that of a final settling of his affairs in the prospect of death. (Compare 2 Sam. 17:23.) The modern writers infer from the treatment described in v. 21, and said to be still practised in the east, that Hezekiah had the plague, which would make it less improbable that this was the instrument employed in the destruction of Sennacherib's army. Of those who make the sickness subsequent to this great deliverance, some suppose the former to have been intended, like the thorn in Paul's flesh, to preserve Hezekiah from being *exalted above measure*. That he was not wholly free from the necessity of such a check, may be inferred from his subsequent conduct to the Babylonian envoys.

2. *And Hezekiah turned his face to the wall, and prayed to Jehovah.* As Ahab turned his face away in anger (1 Kings 21:4), so Hezekiah does the same in grief.

3. *And he said, Ah Jehovah, remember, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a whole heart, and that which is good in thine eyes I have done.* The figure of *walking before God* includes the ideas of communion with him and subjection to him, and is therefore more comprehensive than the

kindred phrase of *walking with him*. By *truth* we are here to understand sincerity and constancy. This verse is not an angry expostulation, nor an ostentatious self-praise, but an appeal to the only satisfactory evidence of his sincerity.

4. *And the word of Jehovah was (or came) to Isaiah, saying (what follows in the next verse). The middle city may either mean the middle of the city (media urbs), or a particular part of Jerusalem so called, perhaps that in which the temple stood, or more generally that which lay between the upper city on Mount Zion and the lower city on Mount Akra. The communication may have been through the middle gate mentioned by Jeremiah (39 : 3). In either case, the interval could not have been a long one, though sufficient to try the faith of Hezekiah.*

5. *Go and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears (or weeping) ; behold, I am adding (or about to add) unto thy days fifteen years. The parallel passage (2 Kings 20 : 5) has : return and say to Hezekiah, the chief (or leader) of my people, Thus saith Jehovah etc. After tears it adds : behold, (I am) healing (or about to heal) thee ; on the third day thou shalt go up to the house of Jehovah. David is particularly mentioned as the person to whom the promise of perpetual succession had been given (2 Sam. 7 : 12). The threatening in v. 1 was conditional, and the second message was designed from the beginning no less than the first. The design of the whole proceeding was to let Hezekiah feel his obligation to a special divine interposition for a recovery which might otherwise have seemed the unavoidable effect of ordinary causes.*

6. *And out of the hand of the king of Assyria I will save thee and this city, and I will cover over (or protect) this city. This probably refers to subsequent attacks or apprehensions. The*

parallel passage (2 Kings 20:6) adds, *for my own sake and for the sake of David my servant*, as in ch. 37:35.

7. *And this (shall be) to thee the sign from Jehovah, that Jehovah will perform this word which he hath spoken.* The English Version has *a sign*; but the article is emphatic, *the (appointed) sign (proceeding) from Jehovah* (not merely from the Prophet). The parallel narrative in Kings is much more circumstantial. What occurs below, as the last two verses of this chapter, there stands in its regular chronological order, between the promise of recovery and the announcement of the sign, so that the latter appears to have been given in compliance with Hezekiah's own request and choice. *And Isaiah said, This (shall be) to thee the sign from Jehovah, that Jehovah will perform the thing which he hath spoken; shall the shadow advance ten degrees, or shall it recede ten degrees? And Hezekiah said, It is a light thing for the shadow to decline ten degrees; nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees* (2 Kings 20:9, 10). As to the transposition of vs. 21, 22, see below.

8. *Behold, I (am) causing the shadow to go back, the degrees which it has gone down (or which have gone down) on the degrees of Ahaz with the sun, ten degrees backward; and the sun returned ten degrees on the degrees which it had gone down.* As to the nature of the phenomenon here described, there are various opinions, but it is not a question of much exegetical or practical importance, since it neither can nor need be ascertained, whether the course of the sun (or of the earth around it) was miraculously changed, or the shadow miraculously rendered independent of the sun which caused it. The former hypothesis is favoured by the statement that *the sun went back*, if taken in its strictest and most obvious sense, although it may be understood as a metonymy of the cause for the effect. At any rate, little would appear to be gained by paring down a miracle to

certain dimensions, when even on the lowest supposition it can only be ascribed to the almighty power of God, with whom all things are not only possible but equally easy. If shut up to the assumption of a miracle, it matters little whether it be great or small. It is enough that God alone could do it or infallibly predict it. If this be admitted, and the historical truth of the narrative assumed, the safest course is to expound it in its simplest and most obvious sense. Still less important is the question whether the *degrees* here mentioned were the graduated scale of a dial, or the steps of a staircase. It was alleged by some early writers on the subject, that the use of dials was unknown in the days of Hezekiah. Later investigations have destroyed the force of this objection, and made it probable that solar chronometers of some sort were in use among the Babylonians at a very early period, and that Ahaz may have borrowed the invention from them, as he borrowed other things from the Assyrians (2 Kings 16:10). There is therefore no historical necessity for assuming that the shadow here meant was the shadow cast upon the steps of the palace, called the *stairs of Ahaz* because he had built them or the house itself. The only question is, whether this is not the simplest and most obvious explanation of the words, and one which entirely exhausts their meaning. If so, we may easily suppose the shadow to have been visible from Hezekiah's chamber, and the offered sign to have been suggested to the Prophet by the sight of it. This hypothesis relieves us from the necessity of accounting for the division into ten or rather twenty degrees, as Hezekiah was allowed to choose between a precession and a retrocession of the same extent (2 Kings 20:9). These two opinions are by no means so irreconcilable as they may at first sight seem. Even supposing the *degrees of Ahaz* to have been an instrument constructed for the purpose of measuring time, it does not follow that it must have been a dial of modern or of any very artificial structure. It is quite as probable that a column at the top of a

staircase cast a shadow which was found available for a rude measurement of time.

9. *A writing of Hezekiah, king of Judah, when he was sick, and lived (i. e. recovered) from his sickness.* This is the title or inscription of the following psalm (vs. 10–20), prefixed, according to the ancient oriental usage, by the author himself, and therefore forming an integral part of the text. The inspiration and canonical authority of this production are clear from its having been incorporated by Isaiah in his prophecies, although omitted in the second book of Kings. There is nothing in the psalm itself at all inconsistent with the supposition, that it was conceived, and perhaps composed, if not reduced to writing, before the complete fulfilment of the promise in the king's recovery. The contrary hypothesis has tended to embarrass and perplex the interpretation, as will be more distinctly seen below. The idiomatic phrase *to live from sickness*, in the sense of convalescence or recovery, occurs repeatedly elsewhere, either fully or in an abbreviated form. (See for example 1 Kings 1:2. Gen. 20:7.)

10. *I said in the pause of my days I shall go into the gates of the grave, I am deprived of the rest of my years.* The words *in the pause of my days* may naturally qualify either the foregoing or the following verb, *I said in the pause of my days*, or, *in the pause of my days I shall go*; but the latter construction is the best. The general idea is the same as in Ps. 102:24, *I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days.* The preposition before *gates* may mean either *to*, *through*, or *into*; but the last is its usual sense after verbs of motion. As parallel expressions may be mentioned *the gates of death* (Ps 9:13) and *the gates of hell* (Matt. 16:18). The last verb expresses not mere loss or privation, but penal infliction. It was because Hezekiah regarded the threatened abbreviation of his life as

a token of God's wrath, that he so importunately deprecated it.

11. *I said, I shall not see Jah, Jah in the land of the living; I shall not behold man again (or longer) with the inhabitants of the world.* *Jah Jah* is an intensive repetition similar to those in vs. 17, 19. Or the second may be added to explain and qualify the first. He did expect to see God, but not in the land of the living. For other explanations of the name see above, on ch. 12:2 and 26:4. *The land of the living* is the present life. The preposition *with* may connect what follows either with the subject or the object of the verb; *I with the inhabitants*, or, *man with the inhabitants*. The last words of the verse bear the same relation to *I shall not see man*, that the words *in the land of the living* bear to *I shall not see Jah*. If the latter designate the place in which he was no more to see God, then the former would naturally seem to designate the place in which he was no more to see man.

12. *My dwelling is plucked up and uncovered by me (or away from me) like a shepherd's tent. I have rolled up, like the weaver, my life; from the thrum he will cut me off; from day to night thou wilt finish me.* The same thing is here represented by two figures. The first is that of a tent, the stakes of which are pulled up, and the covering removed, with a view to departure. The second figure is that of a web completed and removed by the weaver from the loom. *From the thrum*, i. e. the ends of the threads by which the web is fastened to the beam. *From day to night* is commonly explained to mean *before to-morrow*, within the space of one day. The verb in the last clause might, without violence to etymology or usage, be explained to mean, *thou wilt (or do thou) make me whole*. But interpreters appear to be agreed in giving it the opposite sense of *thou wilt make an end of me*. Some suppose moreover that the figure of a weaver and his web is



still continued, and that the idea expressed in the last clause is that of *finishing* a piece of work.

13. *I set (him before me) till the morning* (i. e. all night) *as a lion*, (saying) *so will he break all my bones; from day to night thou wilt make an end of me.* Either these last words are repeated in a different sense, or else the repetition shows that they have no special reference, in the foregoing verse, to the process of weaving. *I set him before me*, i. e. viewed him as present, imagined or conceived of him *as a lion*, and expected him to act as such, saying, *so* (i. e. as a lion) *he will crush all my bones.* This construction gives uniformity of meaning to the clauses, as descriptive of the sufferer's apprehensions.

14. *Like a swallow (or) a crane (or like a twittering swallow), so I chirp; I moan like the dove; my eyes are weak* (with looking) *upward (or on high); O Jehovah, I am oppressed, undertake for me (or be my surety).* In the first clause the moanings of the sufferer are compared, as in many other cases, to the voice of certain animals. The dove is often spoken of in such connections, and the mention of it here makes it probable that the parallel expressions are also descriptive of a bird or birds. The comparison is evidently meant to be descriptive of inarticulate moans or murmurs. The reference of the verbs in the first clause to past time (*I chirped, I moaned*), though assumed by most interpreters, is perfectly gratuitous, when the future proper yields so good a sense. This violation of the syntax has arisen from assuming that the clause must be a retrospective description of something already past, and not an expression of present feeling such as he might have uttered at the moment. That this last is no unnatural hypothesis, is certain from the fact that all interpreters adopt it in the other clause. But if that may be the language of the sufferer at the time of his distress, it is equally natural, or rather more so, to explain the first clause in



the same way. The same word is used in Ps. 119 : 122, in the sense of *undertake for me* or *be my surety*, i. e. interpose between me and my enemies. The reference is rather to protection than to justification.

15. *What shall I say? He hath both spoken to me, and himself hath done (it); I shall go softly all my years for the bitterness of my soul.* This, which is substantially the common version, is the one adopted by most modern writers, who regard the verse as an expression of surprise and joy at the deliverance experienced. *What shall I say?* i. e. how shall I express my gratitude and wonder? *He hath said and done it*, he has promised and performed, perhaps with an implication that the promise was no sooner given than fulfilled. The recollection of this signal mercy he is resolved to cherish *all his years*, i. e. throughout his life, by *going softly*, solemnly, or slowly, *on account of the bitterness of his soul*, i. e. in recollection of his sufferings. Some, however, understand these last words to mean, *in the bitterness of my soul*, i. e. in perpetual contrition and humility. But the preposition is properly expressive, not of the manner of his going, but of its occasion. Compare 1 Kings 21 : 27. Another interpretation of the verse, which might, at first sight, seem more natural, regards it as the language of Hezekiah during his sickness, and as expressive, not of joy and wonder, but of submission. *What shall I say*, in the way of complaint? *He hath both said and done it*, i. e. threatened and performed it. But this view of the first clause cannot be reconciled with any natural interpretation of the second.

16. *Lord, upon them they live, and as to everything in them is the life of my spirit, and thou wilt recover me and make me live.* This exceedingly obscure verse is now most generally understood to mean, that life in general, and the life of Hezekiah in particular, was dependent on the power and promise of God.

*Upon them*, the promise and performance implied in the verbs *said* and *did* of the preceding verse, *they live*, i. e. men indefinitely.

17. *Behold, to peace (is turned) my bitter bitterness, and thou hast loved my soul from the pit of destruction, because thou hast cast behind thy back all my sins.* The English Bible, and some other versions, put an opposite meaning on the clause, as a description, not of his restoration but of his affliction. *For peace I had great bitterness*, or, *on my peace (came) great bitterness.* The other interpretation agrees better with the usage of the preposition and makes the parallelism more exact. We have here another instance of pregnant construction, *to love from*, i. e. *so to love as to deliver from.* This sense is expressed in the English Bible by a circumlocution. The word translated *destruction* means properly nonentity, annihilation, here put for perdition or destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power (2 Thess. 1 : 9). The last clause shows that Hezekiah regarded the threatened destruction as a punishment of sin. To cast behind one, or behind one's back, in Hebrew and Arabic, is to forget, lose sight of, or exclude from view. The opposite idea is expressed by the figure of setting or keeping before one's eyes. (See Ps. 90 : 8. 109 : 14, 15. Jer. 16 : 17. Hos. 7 : 2.)

18. *For the grave shall not confess thee (nor) death praise thee ; they that go down to the pit shall not hope for thy truth.* Here, as often in the Psalms, the loss of the opportunity of praising God is urged as a reason, not only why he should be loth to die, but why God should preserve him. (See Ps. 6 : 5. 30 : 9. 88 : 10, 11.) The language is that of extreme agitation and distress, in which the prospect of the future is absorbed in contemplation of the present, and so far as he does think of futurity, it is upon the supposition of God's wrath. Regarding death, in this case,

as a proof of the divine displeasure, he cannot but look upon it as the termination of his solemn praises. The *truth* mentioned in the last clause is the truth of God's promises, to hope for which is to expect the promised blessing.

19. *The living, the living, he shall thank thee, like me (or as I do) to-day; father to sons shall make known, with respect to thy truth*, i. e. the truth of thy promises, as in the verse preceding. Only the living could praise God in that way to which the writer was accustomed, and on which his eye is here fixed, with special reference, no doubt, to the external service of the temple. The last clause must be taken in a general sense, as Hezekiah was himself still childless.

20. *Jehovah to save me! And my songs we will play, all the days of our life, at the house of Jehovah.* The obvious ellipsis in the first clause may be variously filled with *came, hastened, commanded, was ready, be pleased*, or with the verb *is, is to save for will save*. The reference to the future and the past is equally admissible, since God, in one sense, had already saved him, and in another was to save him still. The singular form, *my song*, refers to Hezekiah as the author of this composition; the plurals, *we will sing* and *our lives*, to the multitude who might be expected to join in his public thanksgiving, not only at first, but in after ages. The general sense is that of public and perpetual praise, the promise of which closes this remarkable production.

21. *And Isaiah said, Let them take a lump (or cake) of figs, and rub them (or lay them softened) on the boil (or inflammation), and he shall live (or let him live), i. e. recover.* It is a common oriental practice to apply figs to pestilential pustules, for the purpose of maturing their discharge.

22. *And Hezekiah said, What sign that I shall go up (to) the*

*house of Jehovah?* The ellipsis is easily supplied by reading, *what sign dost thou give, or what sign is there, or more simply still, what is the sign?* The question is more fully given in 2 Kings 20 : 8 as follows. *And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, What sign that Jehovah is about to heal me, and that I shall go up, on the third day, to the house of Jehovah?* The reference is to the promise as recorded in v. 5 of the same chapter. *Return and say to Hezekiah the chief of my people, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears ; behold, I am about to heal thee ; on the third day thou shalt go up to the house of Jehovah.* The last two verses of this chapter in Isaiah are evidently out of their chronological order, and the question has been raised, whether this transposition is to be ascribed to the original writer, and if so how it is to be accounted for. The obvious and simple supposition is that the passage before us is the first draught or original form of Isaiah's narrative, in which the facts recorded in these two last verses were added by a kind of afterthought, and that in re-writing the account, as a part of the national history, he naturally placed them in their chronological order. It would probably be easy to produce many parallel cases from the correspondence of voluminous letter-writers, or from other cases of repeated composition on the same subject by the same writer.

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## CHAPTER XXXIX.

THIS chapter contains an account of the Babylonian embassy to Hezekiah, and of his indiscreet and ostentatious conduct, which became the occasion of a threatening message by the hands of Isaiah, predicting the Babylonian conquest and captivity, but with a tacit promise of exemption to the king him-

self, and to the country while he lived, which he received with humble acquiescence and thankful acknowledgment. The chapter is evidently a direct continuation of the narrative before it, nor is there any real ground, internal or external, for suspecting its authenticity, antiquity, or genuineness.

1. *In that time, Merodach Baladan, son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a gift to Hezekiah, and (i. e. when) he heard that he was sick and was recovered.* The first phrase is used with great latitude of meaning, and may describe one event either as contemporaneous with another or as following it, at once or more remotely. *Merodach* occurs in Jer. 50:2, as the name of a Babylonian idol. Most of the modern writers agree in identifying this king with the *Mardokempad* of Berosus, as preserved in the Armenian version of Eusebius. The same authority describes these Babylonian princes, not as sovereigns, but as viceroys or tributaries subject to Assyria. In that case, it is not improbable that Merodach Baladan was meditating a revolt, and sent this embassy to gain Hezekiah's co-operation. The congratulation on his recovery may have been a secondary object, or perhaps a mere pretext. In 2 Chron. 32:31, a further design is mentioned, namely, *to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land*, whether this be understood to mean the destruction of Sennacherib's army, or the miraculous recession of the shadow. There is no incompatibility between these different designs. Perhaps an embassy is seldom sent to such a distance with a single undivided errand.

2. *And Hezekiah was glad of them, and showed them his house of rarities, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the good oil (or ointment), and all his house of arms, and all that was found in his treasures; there was not a thing which Hezekiah did not show them, in his house and in all his dominion.* The parallel passage (2 Kings 20:13) has *and he hearkened unto them.* There is no

need of regarding either as an error of transcription, or as the correction of a later writer. Nothing could be more natural than such a variation on the part of the original writer, describing Hezekiah's feelings in the one case and his conduct in the other. He hearkened to them courteously *because* he was glad of their arrival. The goodly or precious oil is supposed by some to have been that used in the unction of kings and priests, or perhaps applied to more ordinary purposes in the royal household.

3. *Then came Isaiah the prophet to the king Hezekiah, and said to him, What said these men, and whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, From a far country came they unto me, from Babylon.* The Prophet was not sent for by the king, as in ch. 37: 2; but he was no doubt sent by God, and came in his official character. The statement in Chronicles is that *God left him, to try him, to know all in his heart* (2 Chr. 32: 31). This may include the sins of vain ostentation and of distrust in God, showing itself in a longing after foreign alliances. *A far country* is nothing more than a familiar designation of Babylon or Babylonia.

4. *And he said, What have they seen in thy house? And Hezekiah said, All that is in my house have they seen; there is not a thing that I have not showed them in my treasures.* The frankness of the answer here recorded rather shows, that there was no attempt at concealment from the first. It was not until the Prophet questioned him, that Hezekiah became aware of the error which he had committed.

5. *And Isaiah said to Hezekiah, Hear the word of Jehovah of Hosts.* This form of expression gives to what follows the solemnity and authority of a divine decree. The parallel passage (2 Kings 20: 16) omits *Hosts*.



6. *Behold, days (are) coming, when all that (is) in thy house, and that which thy fathers have hoarded until this day, shall be carried to Babylon ; there shall not be left a thing (literally a word), saith Jehovah.* Observe the exact correspondence of the punishment with the offence. As the Babylonians had seen all, they should one day take all ; as nothing had been withheld from them now, so nothing should be withheld from them here after. To those who are under no unhappy necessity of explaining away the clearest proofs of inspiration and prophetic foresight, this passage affords a striking instance of the gradual development of prophecy. The general threatening of expatriation had been uttered seven hundred years before by Moses (Lev. 26 : 33 Deut. 28 : 64-67. 30 : 3). Five hundred years later, Ahijah had declared that Israel should be rooted up and scattered *beyond the river* (1 Kings 14 : 15). Within a hundred years, they had been threatened by Amos with *captivity beyond Damascus* (Am. 5 : 27). Isaiah himself had obscurely intimated a future connection between the fortunes of Israel and Babylon (ch. 14 : 1. 21 : 10). But here, for the first time, the Babylonish exile is explicitly foretold, unless the similar prediction of the contemporary prophet Micah (4 : 10) be considered earlier. The fulfilment of the prophecy began in the deportation of Manasseh (2 Chron. 33 : 11), but was described as something still prospective by Jeremiah (20 : 5), in whose days and in the reign of Zedekiah, it was at length fully accomplished (2 Chron. 36 : 18). To the objection, that a national calamity of this description bears no proportion to the fault of Hezekiah, there is no need of any other answer than that Hezekiah's fault was not the cause but the occasion of the punishment which fell upon the people, or rather of its being so explicitly predicted in the case before us. The punishment of Hezekiah's individual fault was included in the punishment of Israel for national offences.

7. *And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt*



*It, shall they take away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.* The future form of the expression in the first clause has respect to the fact that Hezekiah had as yet no children. (See above on ch. 38:2.) *They shall take* may either be an indefinite construction, or agree with the *Babylonians* understood. Instead of *they shall take*, the parallel passage (2 Kings 20:17) has the singular *he shall take*, which is equally correct and regular, in a case of indefinite construction. The fulfilment of this prophecy is recorded in 2 Kings 24:12-16 and Dan. 1:1-7, and that so clearly, that the neologists are driven to their usual supposition of an interpolation, or of such an alteration as to make the terms of the prediction more determinate.

8. *And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, Good is the word of Jehovah which thou hast spoken. And he said, For there shall be peace and truth in my days.* The word *good* is here used, neither in the sense of *gracious* nor in that of *just* exclusively, but in that of *right*, as comprehending both. While the king acquiesces in the threatening prophecy as righteous and deserved, he gratefully acknowledges the mercy with which it is tempered. That he looked upon the woes denounced against his children as a personal misfortune of his own, is clear from his regarding the postponement of the execution as a mitigation of the sentence on himself. The expression of thankfulness at this exemption shows how true the narrative is to nature and experience. It was not more clearly Hezekiah's duty to submit without a murmur to God's threatening, than it was to accept with gratitude the exemption promised to himself. The words, *which thou hast spoken*, are emphatic, and intended to recognize Isaiah as an authoritative messenger from God. The repetition of the verb *he said* implies a pause or interval however short. *Peace* may be here taken in the wide sense of prosperity, but with special reference to its proper import, as denoting exemption from war.

*Truth* has its primary etymological sense of *permanence, stability*, in which the ideas of fidelity and veracity may be included, as effects necessarily imply their cause.

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## CHAPTER XL.

A GLORIOUS change awaits the church, consisting in a new and gracious manifestation of Jehovah's presence, for which his people are exhorted to prepare, vs. 1-5. Though one generation perish after another, this promise shall eventually be fulfilled, because it rests not upon human but divine authority, vs. 6-8. Zion may even now see him approaching as the conqueror of his enemies, and at the same time as the shepherd of his people, vs. 9-11. The fulfilment of these pledges is insured by his infinite wisdom, his almighty power, and his independence both of individuals and nations, vs. 12-17. How much more is he superior to material images, by which men represent him or supply his place, vs. 18-25. The same power which sustains the heavens is pledged for the support of Israel, vs. 26-31.

The specific application of this chapter to the return from Babylon is without the least foundation in the text itself. The promise is a general one of consolation, protection, and change for the better, to be wrought by the power and wisdom of Jehovah, which are contrasted, first, with those of men, of nations, and of rulers, then with the utter impotence of idols. That the ultimate fulfilment of the promise was still distant, is implied in the exhortation to faith and patience. The reference to idolatry proves nothing with respect to the date of the prediction, although more appropriate in the writings of Isaiah

than of a prophet in the Babylonish exile. It is evidently meant, however, to condemn idolatry in general, and more particularly all the idolatrous defections of the Israelites under the old economy.

1. *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.* This command is not addressed specifically to the priests or prophets, much less to the messengers from Babylon announcing the restoration of the Jews, but to any who might be supposed to hear the order, as in ch. 13 : 2, or to the people themselves, who are then required to encourage one another, as in ch. 35 : 3, 4. The imperative form of the expression is poetical. Instead of declaring his own purpose, God summons men to execute it. Instead of saying, *I will comfort*, he says, *comfort ye*. The same idea might have been expressed by saying, in the third person, *let them comfort her*, or in the passive voice, *let her be comforted*. The possessive pronouns are emphatic, and suggest that, notwithstanding what they suffered, they were still Jehovah's people, he was still their God. There is also meaning in the repetition of the verb at the beginning. Such repetitions are not unfrequent in the earlier prophecies. (See ch. 24 : 16. 26 : 3. 29 : 1. 38 : 11, 17, 19.) The prefatory exhortation in this verse affords a key to the whole prophecy, as being consolatory in its tone and purpose. There is evident allusion to the threatening in ch. 39 : 7. Having there predicted the captivity in Babylon, as one of the successive strokes, by which the fall of Israel as a nation and the total loss of its peculiar privileges should be brought about, the Prophet is now sent to assure the spiritual Israel, the true people of Jehovah, that although the Jewish nation should soon cease to be externally identified with the church, the church itself should not only continue to exist, but in a far more glorious state than ever. This is the "people" here meant, and this the "comfort wherewith they were to be comforted."

2. *Speak to (or according to) the heart of Jerusalem, and cry to her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she hath received from the hand of Jehovah double for all her sins.* By speaking to the heart, we are to understand speaking so as to affect the heart or feelings, and also in accordance with the heart or wishes, i. e. what the person addressed desires or needs to hear. Jerusalem is here put for the church or chosen people, whose metropolis it was, and for whose sake the place itself was precious in the sight of God. *Warfare* includes the two ideas of appointed time and hard service, in which sense the verb and noun are both applied to the routine of sacerdotal functions (Num. 4 : 23. 8 : 24, 25), but here still more expressively to the old dispensation, as a period of restriction and constraint. The continuance of the ceremonial system and the hardships of the old dispensation are here and elsewhere represented as chastisements due to the defections of the chosen people, notwithstanding which they should continue to exist, and in a far more glorious character, not as a national church, but as a spiritual church, set free from ritual and local fetters.

3. *A voice crying—in the wilderness—clear the way of Jehovah—make straight (or level) in the desert a highway for our God.* The Septuagint version, retained in the New Testament, is *φωνὴ βοῶντος*, (*the voice of one crying*) which amounts to the same thing. Both in the Hebrew and the Greek, the words *in the wilderness* may be connected either with what follows or with what precedes; but the usual division is more natural, and the other has been insisted upon chiefly for the purpose of rendering the verse inapplicable to John the Baptist, who came preaching in a wilderness, and to whom the words are applied expressly in Matthew 3 : 3, Mark 1 : 3, Luke 3 : 4, as the herald of the new dispensation. Those who deny the inspiration of the Prophet are compelled to reject this as a mere accommodation, and apply the verse exclusively to the return from Babylon, of which

there is no mention in the text or context. It is said indeed that God is here represented as marching at the head of his returning people. But in all the cases which Lowth cites as parallel, there is express allusion to the exodus from Egypt. Here, on the contrary, the only image presented is that of God returning to Jerusalem, revisiting his people, as he did in every signal manifestation of his presence, but above all at the advent of Messiah and the opening of the new dispensation. The verb rendered *prepare* denotes a particular kind of preparation, viz. the removal of obstructions, as appears from Gen. 24 : 31, Lev. 14 : 36, and may therefore be expressed by *clear* in English. The parallel verb means *rectify* or *make straight*, either in reference to obliquity of course or to unevenness of surface, most probably the latter, in which case it may be expressed by *level*. To a general term meaning *way* or *path* is added a specific one denoting an artificial causeway raised above the surface of the earth. There is no need of supposing that the Prophet here alludes to any particular usage of the oriental sovereigns, or that the order of the first and second verses is continued (*let there be a voice crying*). The Prophet is describing what he actually hears—a *voice crying!*—or, *hark, one cries!*

4. *Every valley shall be raised and every mountain and hill brought low, and the uneven shall become level and the ridges a plain.* This may be considered as an explanation of the manner in which the way of the Lord was to be prepared. The common version (*exalted*) seems to imply that the valleys and mountains were to exchange places; but this would not facilitate the passage, which requires that both should be reduced to a common level. The whole impression here intended to be made is that of a way opened through a wilderness by levelling the ground and the removal of obstructions, as a natural image for the removal of the hinderances to God's revisiting his people.

5. *And the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see (it), for the mouth of Jehovah speaks (or hath spoken).* The idea seems to be that as soon as the way is opened, the Lord will show himself. To see God's glory, is a common expression for recognizing his presence and agency in any event. (See Exod. 16 : 7. Is. 35 : 2. 66 : 18.) The specific reference of this verse to the restoration of the Jews from exile is not only gratuitous but inconsistent with the strength and comprehensiveness of its expressions. The simple meaning is, that when the way should be prepared, the glory of God would be universally displayed ; a promise too extensive to be fully verified in that event or period of history.

6. *A voice saying, Cry! And he said (or says), What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all its favour like a flower of the field!* The force and beauty of the verse are much impaired by any version which does not represent the writer as actually hearing what he thus describes. There is a pleasing mystery in the dialogue of those anonymous voices, which is dispelled by undertaking to determine too precisely who the speakers are. All that the words necessarily convey is, that one voice speaks and another voice answers. Interpreters are universally agreed that the last clause contains the words which the second speaker is required to utter. It is possible, however, to connect these words immediately with what precedes, and understand them as presenting an objection to the required proclamation. *What shall (or can) I cry, (since) all flesh is grass etc.* The advantages of this construction are, that it assumes no change of speaker where none is intimated in the text, and that it does away with an alleged tautology, as will be seen below. According to the usual construction we are to supply before the last clause, *and the first voice said again (or answered), Cry as follows : All flesh etc.* This last phrase is here used, not in its widest sense, as comprehending the whole



animal world, but in its more restricted application to mankind, of which some examples may be found in the New Testament (John 17 : 2 Rom. 3 : 20). The comparison of human frailty to grass is common in the Scriptures. The contrast is between the shortlived and precarious favour of man and the infallible promise of God. The quotation in 1 Pet. 1 : 24, 25, confirms the supposition, here suggested by the context, that the words have reference to the preaching of the gospel or the introduction of the new dispensation.

7. *Dried is the grass, faded the flower ; for the breath of Jehovah has blown upon it. Surely the people is grass.* The present form usually given to the verbs conveys the sense correctly as a general proposition, but not in its original shape as a description of what has actually happened, and may be expected to occur again.

8. *Dried is the grass, faded the flower, and the word of our God shall stand forever.* The comparatively rare use of adversative particles in Hebrew is exemplified in this verse, in which the relation of the clauses can be fully expressed in English only by means of the word *but*. By *word* he means neither promise, nor prophecy, nor gospel merely, but *every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God* (Deut. 8 : 3. Matt. 4 : 4). There is a tacit antithesis between the word of God and man ; what man says is uncertain and precarious, what God says cannot fail. Thus understood it includes prediction, precept, promise and the offer of salvation, and although the latter is not meant exclusively, the Apostle makes a perfectly correct and most important application of the verse when, after quoting it, he adds, *and this is the word which is preached* (εὐαγγελισθέν) *unto you*, that is to say, this prophetic declaration is emphatically true of the gospel of Christ. To *stand forever* is a common Hebrew phrase for perpetuity, security, and sure fulfilment



The expression *our God* contains, as usual, a reference to the covenant relation between God and his people. It is possible to avoid the appearance of tautology and give the passage a dramatic form, by making the last clause of v. 6 and the whole of v. 7 a continuation of the words of the second voice, and then regarding v. 8 as a rejoinder by the first voice. The whole may then be paraphrased as follows. A voice says, Cry! And (another voice) says, What shall I cry (i. e. to what purpose can I cry, or utter promises like those recorded in vs. 1-5), since all flesh is grass etc ; the grass withereth etc. ; surely the people is grass (and cannot be expected to witness the fulfilment of these promises). But the first voice says again: The grass does wither, and the flower does fade; but these events depend not on the life of man, but on the word of God, and the word of God shall stand forever.

9. *Upon a high mountain get thee up, bringer of good news, Zion! Raise with strength thy voice, bringer of good news, Jerusalem! Raise (it), fear not, say to the towns of Judah, Lo your God!* The reflective form, *get thee up*, though not a literal translation, is an idiomatic equivalent to the Hebrew phrase (*ascend for thee or for thyself*). Some suppose an allusion to the practice of addressing large assemblies from the summit or acclivity of hills. (See Judges 9:7. Deut. 27:12. Matt. 5:1.) But the essential idea is that of local elevation as extending the diffusion of the sound. Zion or Jerusalem herself is represented as the bearer of good tidings to the towns of Judah. This construction is recommended by the beautiful personification, which it introduces, of the Holy City as the seat of the true religion and the centre of the church. The office here ascribed to it is the same that is recognized in ch. 2:3: *the law shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem*. Not only in the restoration from captivity, or in the personal advent of the Saviour, but in every instance of the Lord's return to his for-

taken people, it is the duty of the church to communicate as well as to receive the joyful tidings.

10. *Lo, the Lord Jehovah will come (or is coming) in (the person of) a strong one, and his arm (is) ruling for him. Lo, his hire is with him and his wages before him.* The double *lo* represents the object as already appearing or in sight. What God is said to do himself in one case, he is represented in the other as accomplishing by means of a powerful instrument or agent, which, however, is defined no further. The essential meaning is that Jehovah was about to make a signal exhibition of his power. The participle *ruling*, in the next clause, is expressive of continuous action. The clause is a poetical description of the arm as acting independently of its possessor, and as it were in his behalf. The two verses may be readily connected, without any change of figure, by supposing that the lost sheep which he has recovered are the recompense referred to in the verse before us. Thus understood, the passage may have furnished the occasion and the basis of our Saviour's beautiful description of himself as the true shepherd, who lays down his life for the sheep, as well as the figure drawn from the recovery of a lost sheep to illustrate the rejoicing in heaven over one repentant sinner. It is probable, not only that Jehovah is here represented as receiving a reward, but that there is special reference to the recompense of the Messiah's sufferings and obedience by the redemption of his people. According to the view which has been taken of the nexus between these two verses, *before him* may possibly contain an allusion to the shepherd's following his flock; but it admits of a more obvious and simple explanation, as denoting that his recompense is not only sure but actually realized, being already in his sight or presence, and *with him*, i. e. in immediate possession.

11. *Like a shepherd his flock will he feed, with his arm will he*

*gather the lambs, and in his bosom carry (them); the nursing (ewes) he will (gently) lead.* Although the meaning of this verse is plain, it is not easily translated, on account of the peculiar fitness and significancy of the terms employed. The word correctly rendered *feed* denotes the whole care of a shepherd for his flock, and has therefore no exact equivalent in English. To *gather with the arm* coincides very nearly, although not precisely, with our phrase to take up in the arms. A very similar idea is expressed by *bearing in the bosom*. The passage is descriptive of the whole relation which Jehovah sustains to his people, as their shepherd, and of which inferior but real exhibitions were afforded long before the advent of the Saviour; for example, in the restoration of the Jews from exile, which is no more to be excluded from the scope of this prophetic picture than to be regarded as its only subject.

12. *Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended in a measure the dust of the earth, and weighed in a balance the mountains, and the hills in scales?* There are two directly opposite opinions as to the general idea here expressed. Some understand the question as an indirect negation of the possibility of doing what is here described. The implied answer, upon this hypothesis, is, No one, and the verse is equivalent to the exclamation, How immense are the works of God! The other and more usual interpretation understands the question thus: Who (but God) has measured or can measure etc.? Thus understood, the verse, so far from affirming the immensity of God's works, represents them as little in comparison with him, who measures and distributes them with perfect ease. The first explanation derives some countenance from the analogy of the next verse, where the question certainly involves an absolute negation, and is tantamount to saying, that no one does or can do what is there described. But this consideration is not sufficient to outweigh

the argument in favour of the other explanation, arising from its greater simplicity and obviousness in this connection. In order to convey the idea of immensity, the largest measures, not the smallest, would have been employed. An object might be too large to be weighed in scales, or held in the hollow of a man's hand, and yet very far from being immense or even vast in its dimensions. On the other hand, the smallness of the measure is entirely appropriate as showing the immensity of God himself, who can deal with the whole universe as man deals with the most minute and trivial objects. *A handful* is here put for the receptacle or measure of that quantity. The span is mentioned as a natural and univocal measure of length. The terms used in the English Bible, *scales* and *balance*, are retained above but transposed, in order to adhere more closely to the form of the original, in which the first word is a singular while the other is a dual, strictly denoting a *pair* of scales. The *dust of the earth* seems to be here put poetically for the earth itself. The literal comprehension of the earth in this specific measure is impossible, and all that the words were intended to suggest is a comparison between the customary measurement of common things by man, and the analogous control which is exercised by God over all his works.

13. *Who hath measured the spirit of Jehovah, and (who, as) the man of his counsel, will teach him (or cause him to know)?* The natural connection seems to be, that he who weighs the hills etc. must himself be independent, boundless, and unsearchable. The last clause is not an answer to the first, but a continuation of the question. Both tenses seem to have been used, as in many other cases, for the purpose of making the implied negation more exclusive. *Who has, and who will or can?*

14. *Whom did he consult (or with whom took he counsel)-and he made him understand, and taught him in the path of judgment,*

and taught him knowledge, and the way of understanding (who) will make him know? The consecution of the tenses is the same as in the foregoing verse. By *judgment* we must either understand *discretion*, in which case the whole phrase will be synonymous with *way of understanding* in the parallel clause; or *rectitude*, in which case the whole phrase will mean the *right way*, not in a moral sense, but in that of a way conducting to the end desired, the right way to attain that end. As these are only different expressions of the same essential idea, the question is of little exegetical importance. The first clause of this verse is quoted in Rom. 11 : 34, with the following words added, *or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?* It is probable that the words were introduced into the Septuagint from the text in Romans, where they are really no part of the quotation from Isaiah, but the apostle's own paraphrase of it or addition to it, the form of which may have been suggested by the first clause of Job 41 : 11. Such allusive imitations occur elsewhere in Paul's writings. (See vol. I. p. 379.) In the present case, the addition agrees fully with the spirit of the passage quoted; since the aid in question, if it had been afforded, would be fairly entitled to a recompense.

15. *Lo, nations as a drop from a bucket, and as dust on scales are reckoned; lo, islands as an atom he will take up.* He is independent, not only of nature and of individual men, but of nations. Both members of the clause are to be construed with the verb at the end. *Dust of the scales or balance*, i. é. dust resting on it, but without affecting its equilibrium.

16. *And Lebanon is not enough for burning, and its beasts are not enough for a sacrifice.* The supremacy and majesty of God are now presented in a more religious aspect, by expressions borrowed from the Mosaic ritual. He is not only independent of the power but also of the good-will of his creatures. This

general allusion to oblation, as an act of homage or of friendship, suits the connection better than a specific reference to expiation. The insufficiency of these sufferings is set forth, not in a formal proposition, but by means of a striking individualization. For general terms he substitutes one striking instance, and asserts of that what might be asserted of the rest. If Lebanon could not suffice, what could? (Compare with this verse ch. 66 : 1. 1 Kings 8 : 27. 2 Chr. 6 : 18. Ps. 50 : 8-13.)

17. *All the nations as nothing before him, less than nothing and vanity are counted to him.* The proposition of v. 15 is repeated, but in still more absolute and universal terms. Instead of *nations*, he says *all the nations*; instead of likening them to grains of sand or drops of water, he denies their very being. *Before him* does not simply mean in his view or estimation, but in comparison with him. So too the parallel expression does not mean *by him*, but *with respect to him*, or simply *to him* in the same sense as when we say that one thing or person is *nothing to another*, i. e. not to be compared with it. The same use of *to*, even without a negative, is clear from such expressions as "Hyperion to a Satyr." That God is the arbiter who thus decides between himself and his creatures, is still implied in both the phrases, although not the sole or even prominent idea meant to be expressed by either. The verse contains the strongest possible expression of insignificance and even non-existence, as predicable even of whole nations, in comparison with God, and in his presence.

18. *And (now) to whom will ye liken God, and what likeness will ye compare to him?* The inevitable logical conclusion from the previous considerations is that God is One and that there is no other. From this, the Prophet now proceeds to argue, that it is folly to compare God even with the most exalted creature, how much more with lifeless matter. The logical relation of



this verse to what precedes, although not indicated in the text, may be rendered clearer by the introduction of an illative particle (*then, therefore, etc.*), or more simply by inserting *now*, which is often used in such connections. The last clause admits of two constructions, both amounting to the same thing in the end. What *likeness* or resemblance (i. e. what similar object) will ye *compare* to him? Or, what *comparison* will ye *institute* respecting him? The last agrees best with the usage of the verb, as meaning to arrange, prepare, or set in order (*to compare*, only indirectly and by implication); while at the same time it avoids the unusual combination of *comparing a likeness* to a thing or person, instead of comparing the two objects, for the purpose of discovering their likeness. The use of the divine name (בָּרָא) expressive of omnipotence is here emphatic and significant, as a preparation for the subsequent exposure of the impotence of idols.

19. *The image a carver has wrought, and a gilder with gold shall overlay it, and chains of silver (he is) casting.* The ambiguous construction of the first clause is the same in the original, where we may either supply a relative, or make it a distinct proposition. In favour of the first, which is a frequent ellipsis both in Hebrew and English, is the fact, that the verse then contains a direct answer to the question in the one before it. What have you to set over against such a God? The image which an ordinary workman manufactures. It enables us also to account for the position of *the image* at the beginning of the sentence, and for its having the definite article, while the following nouns have none, both which forms of expression seem to be significant, *the image which a workman* (i. e. any workman) can produce. The consecution of the tenses seems to show, that the writer takes his stand between the commencement and the end of the process, and describes it as actually going on. The carver has already wrought the image, and the

gilder is about to overlay it. The word *gilder*, although not an exact translation, has been used above, as more appropriate in this connection than the common version, *goldsmith*. The silver chains may be considered either simply ornamental, or as intended to suspend the image and prevent its falling.

20. (*As for*) *the (man) impoverished (by) offering, a tree (that) will not rot he chooses, a wise carver he seeks for it, to set up an image (that) shall not be moved.* While the rich waste their gold and silver upon idols, the poor are equally extravagant in wood. To say that the poor man uses wood instead of gold and silver, is coherent and appropriate, but far less significant and striking than to say, that the man who has already reduced himself to want by lavish gifts to his idol, still continues his devotions, and as he no longer can afford an image of the precious metals, is resolved at least to have a durable wooden one. Thus understood, the verse adds to the general description a particular trait highly expressive of the folly of idolaters. *Wise* is here used in what appears to be its primary meaning of artistically skilful. See note on ch. 3 : 3.

21. *Will you not know? will you not hear? has it not been told you from the first? have you not understood the foundations (or from the foundations) of the earth?* The tenses of the verbs in the first clause have been variously and arbitrarily explained by different interpreters. The English Version and some others exchange both the futures for preterites (*have ye not known? have ye not heard?*) without any satisfactory reason or authority. But the most satisfactory, because the safest and most regular construction, is the strict one given in the Septuagint (*οὐ γνώσεσθε; οὐκ ἀκούσεσθε;*) and revived by Lowth (*will ye not know? will ye not hear?*) The clause is then not a mere expression of surprise at their not knowing, but of concern or indignation at their being unwilling to know. There is no inconsistency between

this explanation of the first two questions and the obvious meaning of the third; because the proof of their unwillingness to hear and know was the fact of their having been informed from the beginning. The words seem to refer simply to the testimony of external nature, and to mean that they who question the existence or supremacy of one God are *without excuse*, as Paul says, *because the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, to wit, his eternal power and Godhead.* (Rom 1:20. Compare Acts 14:17. 17:24.) The foundations of the earth are put by a natural and common figure for its being founded, i. e. its creation.

22. *The (one) sitting on (or over) the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants (are) as grasshoppers (or locusts); the one spreading like a veil (or awning) the heavens, and he stretches them out like the tent to dwell in.* The circle of the earth may either mean the earth itself, or the heavens by which it is surmounted and encompassed. The same comparison occurs in Num. 13:33. It has been disputed whether the last words of the verse mean for himself to dwell in, or for man to dwell in. But they really form part, not of the direct description, but of the comparison, like a tent pitched for dwelling in. With this verse compare ch. 42:5. 44:24. Job 9:8. Ps. 104:2.

23. *The (one) bringing (literally giving or putting) princes to nothing, the judges (or rulers) of the earth like emptiness (or desolation) he has made.* Not only nature but man, not only individuals but nations, not only nations but their rulers, are completely subject to the power of God.

24. *Not even sown were they, not even planted, not even rooted in the ground their stock, and he just breathed (or blew) upon them, and they withered, and a whirlwind like the chaff shall take them*

it (or away). The transition to the future in the last clause is analogous to that in v. 19, and has the same effect of showing that the point of observation is an intermediate one between the beginning and the end of the destroying process. The essential meaning of the whole verse is, that God can extirpate them, not only in the end, but in a moment; not only in the height of their prosperity, but long before they have attained it. It is possible, that the words may have reference to the national existence of Israel as a nation, the end of which, with the continued and more glorious existence of the church independent of all national restrictions, may be said to constitute the great theme of these prophecies.

25. *And (now) to whom will ye liken me, and (to whom) shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.* He winds up his argument by coming back to the triumphant challenge of v. 18.

26. *Lift up on high your eyes and see—who hath created all these? (and who is) the (one) bringing out by number their host?—to all of them by name will he call—from abundance of might and (because) strong in power—not one faileth* (literally, a man is not missed or found wanting). The same exhortation to lift up the eyes occurs elsewhere in Isaiah (ch. 37 : 23. 49 : 18 60 : 4). The construction is not, *see (him) who created these*, or, *see who created these*, but, as the accents indicate, *see, behold*, the heavens and the heavenly bodies, and then a distinct interrogation, *who created these?* To *bring out* is a military term, as appears from ch. 43 : 17 and 2 Sam 5 : 2. It is applied as here to the host of heaven in Job 38 : 32. The sense is that the stars are like an army which its leader brings out and enumerates, the particular points of the resemblance being left to the imagination.

27. *Why wilt thou say oh Jacob, and why (thus) speak oh Israel? Hidden is my way from Jehovah, and from my God my*

*cause will pass* (or *is about to pass*) *away*. The precise question asked by the Prophet is not *why hast thou said, why dost thou say, or why shouldst thou say*, but why wilt thou still go on to say, implying that it had been said, was still said, and would be said again. The two names of the patriarch are here combined, as in many other cases, to describe his offspring. *Hidden* may either mean *unknown*, or *neglected*, or *forgotten*, in which last sense it is used below in ch. 65 : 16. The same verb is applied in Gen. 31 : 49 to persons who are absent from each other and of course out of sight. *Way* is a common figure for the course of life, experience, or what the world calls fortune, destiny, or fate. The figure in the last clause is forensic, the idea that of a cause or suit dismissed, lost sight of, or neglected by the judge. The expression is analogous to that in ch. 1 : 23, where it is said of the unjust judges, that the cause of the widow does not come unto them or before them. The state of mind described is a skeptical despondency as to the fulfilment of God's promises. This form of unbelief is more or less familiar to the personal experience of believers in all ages, and the terms of the exhortation here are not restricted to any single period in the history of Israel.

28. *Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard? The God of eternity* (or *everlasting God*), *Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth, will not faint, and will not tire; there is no search* (with respect) *to his understanding*. That he *will not faint or tire*, implies sufficiently in this case that he neither does nor can, while it expresses his unwillingness to do so. The *ends of the earth* is a common Hebrew phrase for its limits and all that they include. This verse contains an answer to the unbelieving fears expressed in that before it, which ascribed to God an imperfection or infirmity with which he is not chargeable. The last clause may either be a general assertion that he cannot leave his people unprotected through a want of understanding

and of knowledge, or, a suggestion that his methods of proceeding, though inscrutable, are infinitely wise, and that the seeming inconsistency between his words and deeds, far from arguing unfaithfulness or weakness upon his part, does but prove our incapacity to understand or fathom his profound designs. Even supposing that the former is the strict sense of the words, the latter is implicitly contained in them.

29. *Giving to the faint (or weary) strength, and to the powerless might will he increase.* He is not only strong in himself, but the giver of strength to others, or, to state it as an argument *a fortiori*, he who is the only source of strength to others must be strong himself, and able to fulfil his promises. The construction is similar to that in vs. 22, 23, not excepting the transition from the participle to the finite verb.

30. *And (yet) weary shall youths be and faint, and chosen (youths) shall be weakened, be weakened.* There is here an obvious allusion to the terms of v. 28. What is there denied of God, is here affirmed, not only of men in general, but of the stoutest and most vigorous, aptly represented by the young men chosen for military service. That the prominent idea here conveyed is that of manly strength and vigour, is not questioned. The intensive repetition of the verb may either be expressed by the addition of an adverb, as in the English Version (*utterly fall*), or retained in the translation as above.

31. *And (on the other hand) those waiting for Jehovah shall gain new strength; they shall raise the pinion like the eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.* The marked antithesis between this verse and that before it, justifies the use of *but* in English, although not in the original. To *wait for* or *expect* implies faith and patience. This is also the old English meaning of the phrase *to wait upon*, as applied to sor



vants who await their master's orders; but in modern usage the idea of personal service or attendance has become predominant, so that the English phrase no longer represents the Hebrew one. The class of persons meant to be described are those who show their confidence in God's ability and willingness to execute his promises, by patiently awaiting their fulfilment. The restriction of these words to the exiles in Babylon is entirely gratuitous. Although applicable, as a general proposition, to that case among others, they admit of a more direct and striking application to the case of those who under the old dispensation kept its end in view, and still "waited for the consolation of Israel," and "looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (Luke 2: 25, 38.) The phrase translated *they shall gain new strength* properly means *they shall exchange strength*; but the usage of the verb determines its specific meaning to be that of changing for the better or improving. The sense is therefore correctly given in the English Version (*they shall renew their strength*). Of the next phrase there are three distinct interpretations. 1. *They shall mount up with wings.* 2. *They shall put forth fresh feathers like the moulting eagle.* The reference is then to the ancient belief of the eagle's great longevity and of its frequently renewing its youth. (Psalm 103: 5.) The rabbinical tradition is that the eagle, at the end of every tenth year, soars so near the sun as to be scorched and cast into the sea, from which it then emerges with fresh plumage, till at the end of the tenth decade or a century complete, it sinks to rise no more. 3. A third construction, simpler than the first and more agreeable to usage than the second, gives the verb its ordinary sense of causing to ascend or raising and the noun its proper sense of pinion, and connects the two directly as a transitive verb and its object, *they shall raise the pinion* (or *the wing*) *like the eagles*. In the last clause the verbs are introduced together for the third time in a beautiful antithesis. In v. 28 they are applied to Jehovah, in v. 30 to the strongest and most

vigorous of men, as they are in themselves, and here to the waiters for Jehovah, the believers in his promises, who glory in infirmity that his strength may be perfect in their weakness. (2 Cor. 12:9.)

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## CHAPTER XLI.

UNTIL the ends of Israel's national existence are accomplished, that existence must continue, in spite of hostile nations and their gods, who shall all perish sooner than the chosen people, vs. 1-16. However feeble Israel may be in himself, Jehovah will protect him, and raise up the necessary instruments for his deliverance and triumph, vs. 17-29.

1. *Be silent to me, oh islands, and the nations shall gain new strength; they shall approach, then shall they speak, together to the judgment-seat will we draw near.* Having proved the impotence of idols in a direct address to Israel, Jehovah now summons the idolaters themselves to enter into controversy with him. The challenge is a general one directed to the whole heathen world, and *islands* is a poetical variation for *lands* or at the most for maritime lands or sea-coasts. *Silence* in this connection implies attention or the fact of listening, which is expressed in Job 33:31. The imperative form at the beginning gives an imperative sense likewise to the future, which might therefore be translated *let them approach* etc. There is an obvious allusion in the first clause to the promise in ch. 40:31. As if he had said: they that hope in Jehovah shall renew their strength; let those who refuse renew theirs as they can. The participle *then* makes the passage more graphic by bringing distinctly into

view the successive steps of the process. The same judicial or forensic figure is applied to contention between God and man by Job (9 : 19, 20, 32.)

2. *Who hath raised up (or awakened) from the east ? Righteousness shall call him to its foot ; it shall give nations before him, and cause him to tread upon kings ; it shall give (them) as dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to his bow.* The simplest construction of the first clause is that which assumes an abrupt transition from the form of interrogation to that of prediction. The speaker, as it were, interrupts his own question before it is complete, in order to supply what must otherwise be presupposed. Instead of going on to ask who brought the event to pass, he pauses to describe the event himself. Here and elsewhere *righteousness* means the righteousness of God as manifested in his providence, his dealings with his people and their enemies. (See ch. 1 : 27.) To *call to one's foot* is a Hebrew idiom for calling to one's service, or summoning to take a place among one's followers. This act is here ascribed to the divine righteousness as a personified attribute. The other verbs may agree with the same subject or directly with Jehovah. The question, whose appearance is predicted in this verse, has been always a subject of dispute. The truth appears to be that this is a more general intimation of a great eventful movement from the east, which is afterwards repeated with specific reference to Cyrus and his conquests. It might even be supposed without absurdity that there is here an allusion to the general progress of the human race, of conquest, civilization, and religion, from the east to the west.

3. *He shall pursue them ; he shall pass (in) peace (or safety) ; a path with his feet he shall not go.* The last clause describes the swiftness of his motions, as flying rather than walking on foot. This, which would be natural and striking, even in itself

considered, is confirmed by the analogy of Daniel 8:5, where we read that *an he-goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground.*

4. *Who hath wrought and done (it), calling the generations from the beginning? I Jehovah, the first and with the last, I (am) he.* *Calling the generations* may either mean calling them into existence or proclaiming them, i. e. predicting them; probably the latter, since the event itself, although it proved a super-human agency, did not prove it to be that of Jehovah, which could only be established by the fulfilment of predictions uttered in his name. *With the last* does not simply mean *the last*, which is the form employed in ch 41:21-25, 46:8-10, but co-existent with the last, a mode of expression which would seem to imply that although Jehovah existed before all other beings he will not outlast them all. *I am he*, i. e. the being to whom the interrogation has respect, *I am he who has wrought and done it.*

5. *The isles have seen it and are afraid, the ends of the earth tremble; they have approached and come.* Some regard this as a description of the effect produced by the foregoing argument, but others as a part of the argument itself, drawn from the effect of the appearance of the person mentioned in v. 2.

6. *A man his neighbour (i. e. one another) they will help, and to his brother (one) will say, Be strong!* This general description is then filled up, or carried out into detail in the next verse, both containing a sarcastic description of the vain appeal of the idolaters to the protection of their tutelary deities.

7. *And the carver has strengthened the gilder, the smoother with the hammer the smiter on the anvil; he says (or is saying) of the solder, It is good; and he hath strengthened it with nails; it shall*

*not be moved.* The sarcasm consists in making the idolaters dependent upon idols which are themselves dependent upon common workmen and the most trivial mechanical operations for their form and their stability. Hence the particular enumeration of the different artificers employed in the manufacture of these deities. The text of the English Version has *it is ready for the soldering*; but the other construction is now universally adopted. The last clause implies that the strength of the idol is not in itself, but in the nails that keep it in its place or hold its parts together.

8. *And thou Israel my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.* The prominent idea is still that of the contrast between Israel as the people of God, and the heathen as his enemies. The insertion of the substantive verb in the first clause, *thou Israel art my servant*, is unnecessary. This whole verse with the next may be understood as a description of the object of address, or of the person to whom the exhortation in v. 10 is directed. The two names of Jacob are again combined in application to his progeny. The race is described as God's *servant* and his *elect*, or, combining the two characters, his chosen servant, chosen to be his servant. The people are here described not only as the sons of Jacob but of Abraham. The same honourable title that occurs here is bestowed on Abraham in 2 Chr. 20 : 7, James 2 : 23, and in the common parlance of the Arabs, by whom he is usually styled the Friend of God, or absolutely, the Friend.

9. *Thou whom I have grasped from the ends of the earth, and from its joints (or sides) have called thee, and said to thee, My servant (art) thou, I have chosen thee and not rejected thee.* The description of the object of address is still continued. The essential idea here expressed is that of election and separation from the rest of men, a bringing near of those who were afar

off. Interpreters have needlessly disputed whether the vocation of Israel in Abraham, or at the exodus, is here particularly meant; since both are really included in a general description of the calling and election of the people. The phrase *ends of the earth* is a common idiomatic expression for remoteness, often used without reference to particular localities (see ch. 5 : 26. 13 : 5). The idea meant to be conveyed is identical with that expressed by Paul (Eph. 2 : 13). The translation *I have taken* is inadequate, the Hebrew verb meaning *to hold fast*, and the idea of removal being rather implied than expressed.

10. *Fear thou not, for I (am) with thee; look not around, for I (am) thy God; I have strengthened thee, yea I have helped thee, yea I have upheld thee with my right hand of righteousness.* This may be regarded as the conclusion of the sentence beginning in v. 8, as the address to which the two preceding verses are an introduction. The English Version, which adheres to the strict translation of the preterites in v. 9, here gratuitously employs the future form, which wholly changes the complexion of the sentence. It is not a simple promise, but a reference to what God had already done and might therefore be expected to do again. *My right hand of righteousness* or *just right hand*.

11. *Lo, ashamed and confounded shall be all those incensed (or inflamed) against thee; they shall be as nothing (or as though they were not), and destroyed shall be thy men of strife (or they that strive with thee).* Not only shall Israel himself escape, but his enemies shall perish. To be ashamed and confounded, here as usual, includes the frustration of their plans and disappointment of their hopes. On the meaning of *as nothing*, see above, p. 18. The construction of the phrase *thy men of strife* is the same as that of *my right hand of righteousness* in v. 10.

12. *Thou shalt seek them and not find them, thy men of quarrel,*



*they shall be as nothing and as nought, thy men of war* (i. e. they who quarrelled and made war with thee). The first clause contains a common Hebrew figure for complete disappearance and destruction. (See Ps. 37 : 36. Jer. 50 : 20. Amos 8 : 12. Hos. 5 : 6.) The words translated *nothing* and *nought*, strictly denote non-existence and annihilation. (See above, on ch. 40 : 17.)

13. *For I, Jehovah thy Goa, (am) holding fast thy right hand ; the (one) saying to thee, Fear not, I have helped thee,* i. e. I, who command thee not to fear, have already helped thee, or secured thy safety.

14. *Fear not, thou worm Jacob and ye men of Israel ; I have helped thee, saith Jehovah, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.* The same encouragement is here repeated, but with a direct contrast between Israel's weakness and the strength of God. The epithet *worm* expresses the real meanness and unworthiness of man, as in Job 25 : 6. The word translated *redeemer* would suggest to a Hebrew reader the ideas of a near kinsman (Lev. 25 : 24, 25) and of deliverance from bondage by the payment of a ransom. Its highest application occurs here and in Job 19 : 25. The reference to the Son of God, although it might not be perceptible of old, is now rendered necessary by the knowledge that this act, even under the old dispensation, is always referred to the same person of the Trinity. The substitution of the future for the preterite by the English and some other versions has already been seen to be gratuitous and arbitrary.

15. *Behold I have placed thee for* (i. e. appointed thee to be, or changed thee into) *a threshing-sledge, sharp, new, possessed of teeth (or edges) ; thou shalt thresh mountains and beat (them) small, and kills like the chaff shalt thou place (or make).* The erroneous

idea that he simply promises to furnish Israel with the means of threshing mountains, has arisen from the equivocal language of the English Version, *I will make thee*, which may either mean, *I will make for thee*, or *will make thee to become*, whereas the last sense only can by any possibility be put upon the Hebrew, as literally translated above. The oriental threshing machine is sometimes a sledge of thick planks armed with iron or sharp stones, sometimes a system of rough rollers joined together like a sledge or dray. Both kinds are dragged over the grain by oxen. (See Robinson's Palestine, vol. III. p. 143.) The word translated *teeth* strictly denotes *mouths*; but like the primitive noun from which it is derived, it is sometimes applied to the *edge* of a sharp instrument, perhaps in allusion to the figure of devouring. Here it signifies the edges, blades, or teeth, with which the threshing-wain is armed. The image presented is the strange but strong one of a down-trodden worm reducing hills to powder, the essential idea being that of a weak and helpless object overcoming the most disproportionate obstacles, by strength derived from another.

16. *Thou shalt fan (or winnow) them, and a wind shall take them up, and a whirlwind shall scatter them, and thou shalt joy in Jehovah, in the Holy One of Israel shalt thou boast (or glory).* The figure of the preceding verse is here carried out and completed. The mountains, having been completely threshed, are winnowed, in the usual oriental mode, by being thrown to the wind. Israel, on the other hand, is safe, not through his own strength but in that of his protector, *in whom*, i. e. in his relation to whom, he finds his highest happiness and honour. The writer's main design is evidently still to exhibit the contrast between God and his people on the one hand, and the idols and their people on the other.

17. *The suffering and the poor (are) seeking water, and it is not*

(there is none); *their tongue with thirst is parched. I Jehovah will hear (or answer) them, (I) the God of Israel will not forsake them.* The first clause describes the need of a divine interposition, the last the interposition itself. The images are so unlike those of the foregoing verse that they might seem to be unconnected, but for the fact that the whole passage is entirely metaphorical. Thirst is a natural and common metaphor for suffering. Those who restrict the verse to the Babylonish exile are divided on the question, whether it literally describes the hardships of the journey through the wilderness, or metaphorically those of the captivity itself. Both suppositions are entirely arbitrary. There is nothing in the text or context to deprive the passage of its genuine and full sense as a general promise, tantamount to saying, When my people feel their need, I will be present to supply it. Such a promise those in exile could not fail to find appropriate in their case; but it is equally appropriate in others, and especially to the glorious deliverance of the church from the fetters of the old economy. The word translated *hear* does not mean to hear in general, but to hear prayer in a favourable sense, to answer it. The conditional turn given to the sentence in our version (*when the poor and needy seek etc.*) is substantially correct, but a needless departure from the form of the original.

18. *I will open upon bare hills streams, and in the midst of valleys fountains; I will place the desert for (i. e. convert it into) a pool of water, and a dry land for (or into) springs of water.* The same figure for entire and joyful change occurs in ch. 30:25 and ch. 35:7, and with its opposite or converse in Ps. 107:33, 35.

19. *I will give in the wilderness cedar, acacia, and myrtle, and oil-tree; and I will place in the desert fir, pine, and box together.* The main idea, common to all explanations of this verse, is that

of trees growing where they never grew before. It is comparatively unimportant therefore to identify the species. With respect to the cedar and the myrtle there is no doubt. The *acacia* here mentioned is a thorny tree growing in Arabia and Egypt (See Robinson's Palestine, vol. II. p. 349) By the *oil-tree* is meant the *oleaster* or wild olive, as distinguished from the cultivated tree of the same species.

20. *That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of Jehovah hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.* The verbs in the first clause may refer to men in general, or to those immediately concerned as subjects or spectators of the change described. There is a climax in the last clause: he has not only *done* it but *created* it, i. e. produced a new effect by the exertion of almighty power.

21. *Present your cause* (literally *bring it near* or *cause it to approach*, i. e. into the presence of the judge), *saith Jehovah; bring forward your defences* (or *strong reasons*), *saith the king of Jacob.*

22. *They shall bring forward* (or *let them bring forward*) *and show forth to us the (things) which are to happen; the former things, what they were, show forth, and we will set our heart* (apply our mind, or pay attention to them), *and know their issue; or (else) the coming (events) make us to hear.* The prescience of future events is here appealed to as a test of divinity. (Compare Deut. 18: 22. Jer. 28: 9, and ch. 43: 12 below.) They are required to demonstrate their foreknowledge, either by showing that they had predicted something, or by doing it now. The whole idea which the text conveys is that of two contending parties at a judgment-seat. *They* means the party of the false gods and their worshippers, *we* that of Jehovah and his people.

23. *Show forth the (things) to come hereafter, and we will know that ye are gods ; yes, ye shall do good or do evil, and we will look about and see together.* The subjunctive construction, *that we may know*, gives the sense of the original, but with a needless change of form. The same remark applies to the imperative translation of the futures in the next clause (*do good, do evil*). The use of the disjunctive, on the other hand, is rendered almost unavoidable by an entire difference of idiom, the Hebrews constantly employing *and where or in* English seems essential to the sense. *Look about* has the same sense as in v. 10 above, where it seems to express the act of looking round or about upon those present, in that case with the secondary notion of alarm (as looking round for help), but in this case with that of inspection or consideration (we will look about us).

24. *Lo, ye are of nothing (or less than nothing) and your work of nought (or less than nought) ; an abomination (is he that) chooseth (or will choose) you.* This is the conclusion drawn from their failure or refusal to accept the challenge and to furnish the required proof of their deity. *Abomination* is a strong expression often used to describe an object of religious abhorrence. On the choosing of gods, compare Judg. 5 : 8.

25. *I have raised up (one) from the north, and he has come ; from the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name ; and he shall come upon princes as upon mortar, and as a potter treadeth clay.* This is a specific application of the general conclusion in v. 24. If the gods of the heathen could do absolutely nothing, it was impossible that they should be the authors of any one remarkable event, and especially of that on which the Prophet has his eye. The expressions are remarkably similar to those in v. 2, so that the Prophet may be here said to resume the train of thought which had been interrupted at the end of v. 4. Having taken occasion to describe the effect of the event foretold upon

the worshipper of idols, and from that to show the impotence of the gods themselves, he returns to the event which he had been describing, and continues his description. As before, he takes his stand at an intermediate point between the beginning and the end of the whole process, as appears from the successive introduction of the preterite and future. With the single substitution of *he has come* for *he shall come*, the common version is entirely correct. The mention of the north and east together has been variously explained. A satisfactory hypothesis, perhaps, is that the subject of this passage is not a determinate individual, but *the conqueror* indefinitely, who is not identified till afterwards. The act of calling on the name of Jehovah is commonly regarded as an allusion to the profession of the true religion, or at least the recognition of Jehovah as the true God, on the part of Cyrus (Ezra 1 : 2). Compare the figures of the last clause with ch. 10 : 6. 25 : 10.

26. *Who declared from the beginning? (Say) and we will know; and beforehand, and we will say, Right (or True). Nay, there was none that told; nay, there was none that uttered; nay, there was none that heard your words.* The meaning of the whole verse is that the events in question had been foretold by Jehovah and no other.

27. *First to Zion, Behold, behold them! and to Jerusalem a bringer of good news will I give.* This very peculiar idiomatic sentence may be paraphrased as follows. *I am the first to say to Zion, Behold, behold them! and to give Jerusalem a bringer of good news.* The simplest construction is to make the verb at the end govern both clauses; but in English the sense may be expressed more clearly by supplying the verb *say*. The common version of the last clause is correct, but that of the first appears to have no meaning. The sense is not *the first shall say*, but *I first*, i. e. before any other God or prophet.



28. *And I will look, but there is no man; and of these, but there is no one advising (or informing); and I will ask them, and they will return a word (or answer).* He allows them as it were another opportunity of proving their divinity. In the first two clauses, the expectation and the disappointment are described together; in the third, the expectation only is expressed, the result being given in the following verse. First he looks, but finds not what he seeks. Then again, but with the same result. Once more he interrogates them and awaits an answer, but (as the next verse adds) discovers them to be impostors. There is something singularly beautiful in this peculiar structure of the sentence, which is wholly marred by the indirect constructions that are commonly adopted, *that when I asked them could answer a word, or, that I should question them and they return an answer.* The verse is full of laconic and elliptical expressions, which however may be easily completed, as will appear from the following brief paraphrase. *I will look* (once more to see whether any of these idols or their prophet can predict the future), *but there is no one* (who attempts it). *From among* (all) *these* (I seek for a response, but there is none.) (Yet once more) *I will ask them, and* (perhaps) *they will return an answer.* The same application of the verb translated *advising* to the prediction of the future occurs below in ch. 44:26. The form here used is to be strictly construed as a participle.

29. *Lo, they (are) all nought, nothing their works, wind and emptiness their molten images.* This is, at once, the termination of the sentence begun in the last clause of the verse preceding, and the summary conclusion of the whole preceding controversy as to the divinity of any gods except Jehovah. To the usual expressions of nonentity the Prophet adds two other strong descriptive terms, wind and emptiness.

## CHAPTER XLII.

THIS chapter exhibits to our view the Servant of Jehovah, i. e. the Messiah and his people, as a complex person, and as the messenger or representative of God among the nations. His mode of operation is described as being not violent but peaceful, vs. 1-5. The effects of his influence are represented as not natural but spiritual, vs. 6-9. The power of God is pledged for his success, notwithstanding all appearances of inaction or indifference on his part, vs. 10-17. In the latter portion of the chapter, the Church or Body of Christ, as distinguished from the Head, and representing him until he came, is charged with unfaithfulness to their great trust, and this unfaithfulness declared to be the cause of what is suffered, vs. 18-25. Several important exegetical questions with respect to the Servant of Jehovah, will be noticed in the exposition of the chapter.

1. *Behold my servant ! I will hold him fast ; my chosen one (in whom) my soul delights ; I have given (or put) my Spirit upon him ; judgment to the nations shall he cause to go forth.* There is no need of assuming (with the English Version) an ellipsis of the relative twice in the same clause. The separate construction of the first two words, as an introduction to the following description, makes them far more impressive, like the *ecce homo* (ὼς ὁ ἀνθρώπος) of John 19 : 5. The first verb, construed as it is here, signifies to hold fast, for the most part with the accessory idea of holding up, sustaining, or supporting. *Ele t* or *chosen* does not mean choice or excellent, except by implication ; directly and strictly it denotes one actually chosen, set apart, for a definite purpose. By *Spirit*, as in all such cases, we are to understand, not only divine influence, but the divine person

who exerts it. (See vol. 1. pp 64, 163.) The use of the phrase *on him*, where *in him* might have seemed more natural, is probably intended to suggest the idea of descent, or of an influence from heaven. The last clause predicts the diffusion of the true religion. The ancient doctrine of the Jewish church, and of the great majority of Christian writers, is that the servant of the Lord is the Messiah. In favour of the Messianic exposition may be urged not only the tradition of the Jewish church already cited, and the perfect facility with which this hypothesis at once accommodates itself to all the requisitions of the passages to which it is applied, but also the explicit and repeated application of these passages to Jesus Christ in the New Testament. These applications will be noticed *seriatim* as the texts successively present themselves. To this first verse there are several allusions more or less distinct and unequivocal. Besides the express citation of it, with the next three verses, in Matt. 12 : 19–21, there is an obvious allusion to its terms, or rather a direct application of them made by God himself, in the descent of the Holy Spirit on our Saviour at his baptism, and in the words pronounced from heaven then and at the time of his transfiguration: *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased* (Matt 3 : 17. 17 : 5). That Christ was sent to the Jews and not the Gentiles, is only true of his personal ministry and not of his whole work as continued by his followers, who were expressly commissioned to go into all the world, to make disciples of all nations, the only restriction imposed being that of *beginning at Jerusalem*. It only remains to be considered, whether this application of the title and the description of our Saviour is exclusive of all others, as its advocates commonly maintain. This inquiry is suggested by the fact, which all interpreters admit, that Israel, the chosen people, is not only called by this same name, but described as having some of the same attributes, not only elsewhere, but in this very context, and especially in vs. 19, 20, of this chapter, where any other

explanation of the terms, as we shall see, is altogether inadmissible. Assuming, then, that the Messiah is the servant of Jehovah introduced at the beginning of the chapter, there are only two ways of accounting for the subsequent use of the same language with respect to Israel. The first way is by alleging a total difference of subject in the different places, which in fact though not in form is to decline all explanation of the fact in question, as being either needless or impossible. That such a twofold application of equivalent expressions to entirely different subjects is conceivable and must in certain cases be assumed, there is no need of denying. But unless we abandon all attempt to interpret language upon any settled principle, we must admit that nothing short of exegetical necessity can justify the reference of the same descriptive terms to different subjects in one and the same context. If then there is an exegetical hypothesis by which these applications can be reconciled, without doing violence to usage or analogy, it seems to be clearly entitled to the preference. Such a hypothesis, it seems to me, is one obscurely stated by some older writers, but which may be more satisfactorily propounded thus, that by the *servant of Jehovah*, in these Later Prophecies of Isaiah, we are to understand the Church with its Head, or rather the Messiah with the Church which is his body, sent by Jehovah to reclaim the world from its apostasy and ruin. This agrees exactly with the mission both of the Redeemer and his people as described in Scripture, and accounts for all the variations which embarrass the interpretation of the passages in question upon any more exclusive exegetical hypothesis. It is also favoured by the analogy of Deut. 18, where the promised Prophet, according to the best interpretation, is not Christ exclusively, but Christ as the Head of the prophetic body who possessed his spirit. Another analogy is furnished by the use of the phrase *Abraham's seed*, both individually and collectively. He whom Paul describes as the seed of Abraham, and Moses as a prophet like unto him

self, in a personal but not an exclusive sense, is described by Isaiah as the servant of Jehovah, in his own person, but not to the exclusion of his people, so far as they can be considered his co-workers or his representatives. Objections founded on the want of agreement between some of these descriptions and the recorded character of Israel, are connected with a superficial view of Israel considered simply as a nation and like other nations, except so far as it was brought into external and fortuitous connection with the true religion. An essential feature in the theory proposed is that this race was set apart and organized for a specific purpose, and that its national character is constantly subordinate to its ecclesiastical relation. There is precisely the same variation in the language used respecting it as in the use and application of the term *ἐκκλησία* in the New Testament. Israel is sometimes described as he was meant to be, and as he should have been; sometimes as he actually was. The name is sometimes given to the whole race and sometimes to the faithful portion of it, or, which amounts to the same thing, it is sometimes used to denote the real sometimes the nominal Israel. The apparent violence of applying the same description to an individual person and a body, will be lessened by considering, that Christ was in the highest and the truest sense the Servant of Jehovah and his messenger to man, but that his body, church, or people, was and is a sharer in the same vocation, under the gospel as an instrument or fellow-worker, under the law as a type or representative of one who had not yet become visible. Hence the same things might be predicated to a great extent of both. As the Messiah was the servant and messenger of God to the nations, so was Israel. It was his mission also to diffuse the true religion and reclaim the nations. From the very first it was intended that the law should go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. (Ch. 2 : 3.) The national restrictions of the old economy were not intended to exclude the gentiles from the

church, but to preserve the church from assimilation to the gentiles. All the world might have come in if they would by complying with the terms prescribed; and nothing is more clear from the Old Testament than the fact that the privileges of the chosen people were not meant to be restricted even then to the natural descendants of Israel, for this would have excluded proselytes entirely. Multitudes did embrace the true religion before Christ came; and that more did not, was partly their own fault, partly the fault of the chosen people, who neglected or mistook their high vocation as the Messiah's representative and as Jehovah's messenger. If it be asked, how the different applications of this honourable title are to be distinguished, so as to avoid confusion or capricious inconsistency, the answer is as follows. Where the terms are in their nature applicable both to Christ as the Head and to his Church as the Body, there is no need of distinguishing at all between them. Where sinful imperfection is implied in what is said, it must of course be applied to the Body only. Where a freedom from such imperfection is implied, the language can have a direct and literal reference only to the Head, but may be considered as descriptive of the Body, in so far as its idea or design is concerned, though not in reference to its actual condition. Lastly, when anything is said implying deity or infinite merit, the application to the Head becomes not only predominant but exclusive. It may further be observed that as the Church, according to this view of the matter, represents its Head, so it is represented by its leaders, whether prophets, priests, or kings; and as all these functions were to meet in Christ, so all of them may sometimes be particularly prominent in prophecy. How far the theory here stated with respect to the *Servant of Jehovah* is either necessary to explain the prophecies or really consistent with their terms, can only be determined by a specific application of the principle to the successive parts of the description. If applied to this first verse, it would determine its



interpretation, as describing Israel, the ancient church, to be in a peculiar sense the Servant of Jehovah, protected and sustained by Him, enlightened by a special revelation, not for his own exclusive use, but as a source of saving light to the surrounding nations. At the same time it would show him to possess this character not in his own right but in that of another, as the representative and instrument of one who, though he was with God and was God, took upon him the form of a servant and received the Spirit without measure, that he might be *a light to lighten the gentiles* as well as *the glory of his people Israel*. (Luke 2:32) The reference to Christ is here so evident, however, that there is no need of supposing any distinct reference to his people at all, nor any advantage in so doing, except that of rendering the subsequent verses still more significant, as descriptive not only of his personal ministry, but of the spirit and conduct of his people, both before and after his appearance.

2. *He shall not cry (or call aloud), and he shall not raise (his voice), and he shall not let his voice be heard in the street (or abroad, without).* The simple meaning of the verse is, he shall not be noisy but quiet. As applied both to Christ and to the Church, this verse describes a silent, unostentatious method of proceeding. The quotation in Matth. 12:19 is commonly explained as referring to our Saviour's mild and modest demeanour; but it rather has respect to the nature of his kingdom, and to the means by which it was to be established. His forbidding the announcement of the miracle is not recorded simply as a trait of personal character, but rather as implying that a public recognition of his claims was not included in his present purpose.

3. *A bruised (or crushed) reed he will not break, and a dim wick he will not quench; by the truth will he bring forth judgment.* The verbs of the first clause have no exact equivalents in English.

The first appears to mean broken but not broken off, which last is denoted by the other. The common version, *smoking flax*, is that of the Septuagint and Vulgate. The Hebrew noun really denotes flax (Ex. 9 : 31), but the adjective means faint or dim ; so that in order to convey the meaning in translation, the former must be taken in the specific sense of *wick*, which it also has in ch. 43 : 17. The verse continues the description of the mode in which the Messiah and his people were to *bring forth judgment to the nations*, or in other words to spread the true religion. It was not to be by clamour or by violence. The first of these ideas is expressed in the preceding verse, the last in this. That such is the true import of the words is clear from the addition of the last clause, which would be unmeaning if the verse related merely to a compassionate and sympathetic temper. That this verse is included in Matthew's quotation (ch. 12 : 19), shows that he did not quote the one before it as descriptive of a modest and retiring disposition. For although such a temper might be proved by Christ's prohibiting the publication of his miracles, this prohibition could not have been cited as an evidence of tenderness and mildness. The only way in which the whole quotation can be made appropriate to the case in hand, is by supposing that it was meant to be descriptive, not merely of our Saviour's human virtues, but of the nature of his kingdom and of the means by which it was to be established. That he was both lowly and compassionate is true, but it is not the truth which he established by his conduct upon this occasion, nor the truth which the evangelist intended to illustrate by the citation of these words. As well in their original connection as in Matthew's application of them, they describe that kingdom which was not of this world ; which came not with observation (Luke 17 : 20) ; which was neither meat nor drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost (Rom. 14 : 17) ; which was founded and promoted not by might nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord ;

(Zech. 4 : 6) and of which its founder said (John 18 : 36), *If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews, but now is my kingdom not from hence.* And again (John 18 : 37), when Pilate said unto him, *Art thou a king then?* Jesus answered, *Thou sayest (rightly) that I am a king; to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth; every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.* How perfectly does this august description tally with the great prophetic picture of the Servant of Jehovah, who was to bring forth judgment to the nations, and in doing so was not to cry or raise his voice or let men hear it in the streets, nor by brutal force to break the crushed reed or quench the dim wick, but to conquer by healing and imparting strength. This passage also throws light on the true sense of the somewhat obscure phrase *the truth*, by showing that it means *with respect to the truth*, which is here equivalent to saying *by the truth*. This construction, by presenting an antithesis between the true and false way of bringing forth judgment to the gentiles, is much to be preferred to those constructions which explain the phrase as simply meaning *in truth* (i. e. truly), or *in permanence* (i. e. surely), or *unto truth* (i. e. so as to establish and secure it). All these may be suggested as accessory ideas; but the main idea seems to be the one first stated, namely, that the end in question is to be accomplished not by clamour, not by violence, but by the truth.

4. *He shall not be dim, and he shall not be crushed, until he shall set judgment in the earth, and for his law the isles shall wait.* He shall neither conquer nor be conquered by violence. This verse is a new proof that the one before it does not describe mere tenderness and pity for the weak. The antithesis would then be, he shall neither be unkind to the infirm nor infirm himself. On the other hand, the sense is clear and pertinent

if v. 3 means that he shall not use violence towards those who are weaker than himself, and v. 4 that he shall not suffer it from those who are more powerful; he shall neither subdue others nor himself be subdued by force. To *set or place judgment in the earth* is to establish and confirm the true religion. By *his law* we are to understand his word or revelation, considered as a rule of duty. Here again *the islands* is a poetical expression for the nations, or more specifically for the transmarine and distant nations. The hope meant in the last clause is not so much subjective as objective. The thing described is not the feeling of the gentiles towards the truth, but their dependence on it for salvation, and on Christ for the knowledge of the truth itself. *For his law the isles are waiting* (or *must wait*), and till it comes they must remain in darkness.

5. *Thus saith the Mighty (God), Jehovah, creating the heavens and stretching them out, spreading the earth and its issues, giving breath to the people on it, and spirit to those walking in it.* The substitution of the preterite for the participle in the English Version (*he that created the heavens and stretched them out*) is not only a gratuitous departure from the form of the original, but hides from the English reader the allusion to the creative power of God as constantly exercised in the continued existence of his works. The same figure is exhibited more fully in ch. 40 : 22, and the places there referred to. This clause is not a scientific but a poetical description. To the eye, the heavens have the appearance of a canopy or curtain, and the verdant surface of the earth that of a carpet. No single English word is so appropriate as *issues* to express both the meaning and the derivation of the corresponding one in Hebrew, which denotes the things that come out of the earth, its produce, growth, or vegetation with particular allusion here to grass. Here, as in ch. 40 : 7, the word *people* is evidently used in application to the whole human race, a fact of some impor-

tance in the exposition of what follows. The enumeration of Jehovah's attributes in this verse is intended to accredit the assurances contained in the context.

6. *I Jehovah have called thee in righteousness, and will lay hold of thee (or hold thee fast), and will keep thee, and will give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the gentiles.* The act of calling here implies selection, designation, and providential introduction to God's service. *In righteousness*, i. e. in the exercise of righteousness on God's part, including the fulfilment of his promises as well as of his threatenings. *I will hold thee fast*, and thereby hold thee up, sustain thee. (See above, v. 1.) We may understand by *a covenant of the people* a negotiator between God and the people. This use of *covenant*, although unusual, is in itself not more unnatural or forced than that of *light* in the next phrase. As *light of the nations* must mean a source or dispenser of light to them, so *covenant of people*, in the very same sentence, may naturally mean the dispenser or mediator of a covenant with them. The only reason why the one appears less natural and simple than the other, is that *light* is habitually used in various languages both for the element of light and for its source or a luminous body, whereas no such twofold usage of the other word exists, although analogies might easily be traced in the usage of such words as *justice* for judge, *counsel* for counsellor, in both which cases the functionary takes the name of that which he dispenses or administers. But supposing this to be the true construction of the phrase, the question still arises, who are the contracting parties, or in other words, what are we to understand by *people*? The great majority of writers make it mean the *Jews*, the chosen people of Jehovah, and the *covenant* the mediator or negotiator of a new covenant between them and Jehovah, according to the representation in Jer. 31 : 31-33. But it is better to understand it as a description of the *servant of Jehovah* in the char-

acter, not only of a light (or an enlightener) to the nations, but of a mediator or negotiator between God and the people, i. e. men in general. These are epithets applicable in their highest sense to Christ alone, to whom they are in fact applied by Simeon (Luke 2 : 32) and Paul (Acts 13 : 47). That neither of these quotes the phrase *a covenant of the people*, does not prove that it has no relation to the gentiles, but only that it does not relate to them exclusively, but to the whole human race ; whereas the other phrase, as applying specifically to the gentiles, and as being less ambiguous, was exactly suited to Paul's purpose.

7. *To open blind eyes, to bring out from prison the bondman, from the house of confinement the dwellers in darkness.* This was the end to be accomplished by the Servant of Jehovah in the character or office just ascribed to him. The spiritual evils to be remedied are represented under the figures of imprisonment and darkness, the removal of the latter having obvious allusion to the *light of the nations* in v. 6. That explanation of these words, which refers them to the restoration of the Jews from exile, is encumbered with various and complex difficulties. What is said of bondage must be either strictly understood or metaphorically. If the former be preferred, how is it that the Prophet did not use expressions more exactly descriptive of the state of Israel in Babylon ? A whole nation carried captive by its enemies could hardly be described as prisoners in dark dungeons. If it be said that this is a figurative representation of confinement in the dark, the principle of strict interpretation is abandoned, and the imprisonment itself may be a metaphor for other evils. There is then left no specific reason for applying this description to the exile any more than to a hundred other seasons of calamity. Another and more positive objection to this limitation is, that it connects this verse with only part of the previous description, and that the part to which it bears the



least resemblance Even granting what has been disproved, that the *covenant of the people* has respect to Israel alone, how is it that the other attribute, *a light to the gentiles*, must be excluded in interpreting what follows? It was surely not in this capacity that the Servant of Jehovah was to set the Jewish exiles free. The opening of the eyes and the deliverance of those that sit in darkness are correlative expressions to the *light of the gentiles*, which on this account, and as the nearest antecedent, must decide the sense of this verse, if that sense depend on either of these attributes exclusively. *I will make thee a light to the gentiles, to open the blind eyes* etc. can scarcely mean, I will make thee an instructor of the heathen to restore the Jews from captivity in Babylon. Whether the verse before us therefore be strictly or figuratively understood, it cannot be applied to the captivity without doing violence at once to the text and context. The very same reasoning applies to the analogous expressions used in ch. 49:9, and thus corroborates our previous conclusion, that the context in neither of these places favours, much less requires, the restriction of these words to the Jews. The only natural interpretation of the verse before us is that which makes it figurative like the one preceding it; and the only natural interpretation of its figures is the one which understands them as descriptive of spiritual blindness and spiritual bondage, both which are metaphors of constant application to the natural condition of mankind in the Old as well as the New Testament. The removal of these evils is the work of Christ, as the revealer of the Father, who has brought life and immortality to light; but in subordination to him, and as his representative, his church may also be correctly represented as a covenant of the people and a light of the nations; since the law, though a divine revelation, was to go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

8. *I am Jehovah, that is my name, and my glory to another will*

*I not give, and my praise to graven images.* The name *Jehovah* is here used with emphasis, in reference to its etymological import, as descriptive of a self-existent, independent, and eternal being. *Graven images* are here put, as in many other cases, for idols in general, without regard to the mode of their formation. The connection of this verse with what precedes may seem obscure, but admits of an easy explanation. From the assertion of *Jehovah's* power and perfection as a ground for his people's confidence, the Prophet now proceeds, by a natural transition, to exhibit it in contrast with the impotence of those gods in whom the gentiles trusted. These are represented not only as inferior to God but as his enemies and rivals, any act of worship paid to whom was so much taken from what he claimed as his own and as his own exclusively. The general doctrine of the verse is, that true and false religion cannot coexist; because, however tolerant idolatry may be, it is essential to the worship of *Jehovah* to be perfectly exclusive of all other gods. This is included in the very name *Jehovah*, and accounts for its solemn proclamation here.

9 *The first (or former) things—lo, they have come, and new things I(am) telling; before they spring forth (sprout or germinate) I will make (or let) you hear (them).* This is an appeal to former prophecies already verified, as grounds of confidence in those yet unfulfilled. The strong and beautiful expression in the last clause can only mean that the events about to be predicted were beyond the reach of human foresight, and is therefore destructive of the modern notion, that these prophecies were written after Cyrus had appeared, and at a time when the further events of his history could be foreseen by an observer of unusual sagacity. Such a prognosticator, unless he was also a deliberate deceiver, a charge which no one brings against this writer, could not have said of what he thus foresaw, that he announced it before it had begun to germinate, i. e. while the

seed was in the earth, and before any outward indications of the plant could be perceived. As this embraces all the writer's prophecies, it throws the date of composition back to a period before the rise of Cyrus, and thereby helps to invalidate the arguments in favour of regarding it as contemporaneous with the Babylonish exile.

10. *Sing to Jehovah a new song, his praise from the end of the earth, (ye) going down to the sea and its fulness, isles and their inhabitants!* To sing a new song, according to Old Testament usage, is to praise God for some new manifestation of his power and goodness. It implies, therefore, not only fresh praise, but a fresh occasion for it. Reduced to ordinary prose style, it is a prediction that changes are to take place, joyfully affecting the condition of the whole world. That this is a hyperbole, relating to the restoration of the Jews from Babylon, is too gratuitous and forced a supposition. *Its fulness* may either be connected with *the sea*, and both made dependent on *go down* (to the sea and its fulness), or regarded as a distinct object of address. In the latter case, the marine animals would seem to be intended; in the former, the whole mass of water with its contents; the last is more poetical and natural. The antithesis is then between the sea with its frequenters on the one hand and the isles with their inhabitants on the other.

11. *The desert and its towns shall raise (the voice), the enclosures (or encampments, in which) Kedar dwells; the dwellers in the Rock shall shout, from the top of mountains shall they cry aloud.* This is a direct continuation of the previous description, in which the whole world is represented as exulting in the promised change. The reference of this verse to the course of the returning exiles through the intervening desert is forbidden by the mention of the sea and its fulness, the isles and the ends of the earth, in the preceding and following verses. If these are not

all parts of the same great picture, it is impossible to frame one. If they are, it is absurd to take the first and last parts in their widest sense as an extravagant hyperbole, and that which is between them in its strictest sense as a literal description. The only consistent supposition is that sea, islands, deserts, mountains, towns, and camps, are put together as poetical ingredients of the general conception, that the earth in all its parts shall have occasion to rejoice. The mention of cities as existing in the wilderness appears less strange in the original than in a modern version, because both the leading words have a greater latitude of meaning than their usual equivalents, the first denoting properly a pasture-ground, and being applicable therefore to any uncultivated region whether uninhabited or not, the other answering to *town* in its widest English sense inclusive of both villages and cities. The translation *villages* is too restricted, since the Hebrew word is applicable also to collections of tents or nomadic encampments, which appears to be the prominent idea here. Kedar was the second son of Ishmael (Gen. 25: 13). Here, as in ch. 21: 16, the name is put for his descendants, or by a natural metonymy for the Arabians in general. The rabbinical name for the Arabic language is *the tongue of Kedar*.

12. *They shall place (or give) to Jehovah honour, and his praise in the islands they shall show forth (or declare).* Still another mode of saying, the whole world shall praise him. The islands are again mentioned, either as one out of several particulars before referred to, or with emphasis, as if he had said, *even in the islands*, beyond sea, and by implication in the furthest regions. As the verb to *give*, in Hebrew usage, has the secondary sense of *placing*, so the verb to place is occasionally used as an equivalent to that of giving. (See vol. I. p. 304.) The translation of the verbs in this verse as imperatives (*let them give glory and declare*), although substantially correct, is a needless departure from the form of the original, in which the idea of

command or exhortation is sufficiently implied though not expressed. The verbs do not agree with the series of nouns in the foregoing verse (desert, towns, etc.), for these could not celebrate Jehovah *in the islands*. The construction is indefinite, *they*, i. e. men in general, a form of speech of far more frequent occurrence in Hebrew than would be suspected by a reader of the English Bible.

13. *Jehovah, like a strong one, will go forth; like a warrior (literally a man of battle) he will rouse (his) zeal; he will shout, yea he will cry; against his foes he will make (or show) himself strong.* From the effect he now reverts to the efficient cause. The universal joy before described is to arise from Jehovah's triumph over his enemies. The martial figures of the verse are intelligible in themselves and all familiar to the usage of the Scriptures. To *go forth* is the common Hebrew phrase for going out to war or battle. (See above, on ch. 40:26.) *Zeal* may either have its general sense of ardour, strong and violent affection of whatever kind, or its more specific sense of jealousy or sensitive regard for his own honour and for the welfare of his people. (See vol. I. p. 136) The idea is that of an ancient warrior exciting his own courage by a shout or war-cry. The last clause may be understood to mean, *he shall prevail over his enemies*; but although this idea is undoubtedly included, it is best to retain the reflexive form and import of the verb as far as may be, in translation.

14. *I have long been still, (saying) I will hold my peace, I will restrain myself. (But now) like the travailing (woman) I will shriek, I will pant and gasp at once.* The second and third verbs may be regarded as the expression of his own determination or intention while the silence lasted. The omission of the verb *to say* before such repetitions or citations is not only frequent in general usage, but the more natural in this case from

the fact that this whole verse is universally regarded as the words of God himself, although he is not expressly introduced as the speaker. There is indeed another very ancient explanation of the last two verbs, given in the English Version, *I will destroy and devour at once*. 'My wrath, long restrained, I will now let break forth,' is no doubt the true sense of the verse on either supposition.

15 *I will lay waste mountains and hills, and all their herbage will I dry up; and I will turn (literally place) streams to islands and pools (or lakes) will I dry up*. Having described the effect and the cause of the great future change, he now describes the change itself, under the common form of a complete revolution in the face of nature, sometimes with special reference to the heavens (ch. 13 : 10), sometimes (as here and in ch. 35 : 6, 7) to the earth. The verse probably contains an allusion to the ancient cultivation of the hills of Palestine, by means of terraces, many of which are still in existence. (See vol. I. p. 116.)

16. *And I will make the blind walk in a way they know not, in paths they know not I will make them tread; I will set (or turn) darkness before them to light, and obliquities to straightness. These are the words; I have made them (or done them) and have not left them*. The combination of these two antitheses (light and dark, crooked and straight) shows clearly that they are both metaphorical expressions for the same thing that is represented under other figures in the verse preceding, viz. total change; in what respect and by what means, the metaphors themselves do not determine. And yet some writers understand the first clause as specifically meaning, that the exiles in Babylon should be delivered at a time and in a manner which they had not expected; while another class apply the words exclusively to spiritual exercises or religious experience. To both these objects the description admits of an easy application; but neither



of them is to be considered its specific subject. It is impossible, without the utmost violence, to separate this one link from the chain of which it forms a part, that is to say, from the series of strong and varied metaphors, by which the Prophet is expressing the idea of abrupt and total change. The same thing that is meant by the wasting of cultivated hills, the withering of herbage, and the drying up of streams and lakes, is also meant by the leading of blind men in a new path, i. e. causing them to witness things of which they had had no previous experience. The simplest and most regular construction of the last clause is that which refers the pronouns not to a noun understood but to the expressed antecedent. *These are the words* (i. e. my promises). *I have performed them and have not abandoned them*, that is to say, I have not relinquished my design until it was accomplished. (Compare the last clause of Ezekiel 17 : 24.) The translation of these verbs as futures has arisen merely from a feeling on the part of the interpreter that the words *ought* to contain a promise ; whereas the promise is implied or rather superseded by the declaration that the work is done already, or at least that the effect is already secured. The usual construction, which makes one a preterite and one a future, is doubly arbitrary and capricious.

17. *They are turned back, they shall be ashamed with shame* (i. e. utterly ashamed), *those trusting in the graven image, those saying to the molten image, Ye are our gods.* This verse describes the effect to be produced by the expected changes on the enemies of God and the worshippers of idols. *They are turned back*, utterly defeated, foiled in their malignant opposition. Nor is this all ; for they are yet to be utterly ashamed, confounded, disappointed, and disgraced. In the last clause it is plain that the graven and molten image are separated only by the parallelism, because the address at the end is in the

plural form, not *thou art*, but *ye are our gods*. On the usage of these two nouns, see vol. i. p. 356.

18. *Ye deaf, hear ! and ye blind, look (so as) to see !* From the connection, this would seem to be a call upon the worshippers of idols, to open their eyes and ears, and become conscious of their own delusions.

19. *Who (is) blind but my servant, and deaf like my messenger (whom) I will send ? Who (is) blind like the devoted one, and blind like the servant of Jehovah ?* Why should he call the heathen blind and deaf, when Israel himself, with all his honours and advantages, refused to see or hear ? The very people, whose mission and vocation it was to make the gentiles see and hear, seemed to emulate their insensibility. Servant of Jehovah is a title applicable not only to the Head but to the Body also. Here, where the language implies censure and reproach, the terms must be referred exclusively to Israel, the messenger whom God had sent to open the eyes of the other nations, but who had himself become wilfully blind. The future verb implies that the mission was not yet fulfilled.

20. *Thou hast seen many things, and wilt not observe. (Sent) to open ears ! and he will not hear.* In the first clause he turns to Israel and addresses him directly : in the last he turns away from him again, and, as it were, expresses his surprise and indignation to the by-standers. The sense of the whole, leaving out of view this difference of form, is the same as in the foregoing verse, namely, that Israel had eyes but saw not, and instead of opening the ears of others was himself incapable of hearing. The sentence may be said to exhibit a climax. In the first clause the contrast is between the blindness of the people and the light which they enjoyed ; in the last it is between their deafness and their high vocation to open the ears

of others. Hence the abrupt and impassioned form of expression in the latter case. An explanation is afforded by the analogy of v. 7, where the same infinitive describes the end for which the Servant of Jehovah was sent.

21. *Jehovah (is) willing for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law and make it honourable.* The people, being thus unfaithful to their trust, had no claim to be treated any longer as an object of Jehovah's favour; and yet he continues propitious, not on their account, but out of regard to his own engagements, and for the execution of his righteous purposes. For these reasons he will still put honour on the chosen people and the system under which they lived.

22. *And (yet) it (is) a people spoiled and robbed, ensnared in holes all of them, and in houses of confinement they are hidden. They have become a spoil, and there is none delivering; a prey, and there is none saying, Restore.* Here another contrast is brought into view. As the conduct of the people did not answer to their high vocation, so their treatment does not answer to the preceding declaration of God's purpose. If he still designed to honour them, though not for their own sake, how was this to be reconciled with what they suffered at the hands of their enemies? The terms are no doubt metaphorical, and therefore not exclusively descriptive of literal captivity. At the same time it may be admitted that the sufferings of Israel in exile furnished one of the most memorable instances of what is here described in general.

23. *Who among you will give ear to this, will hearken and war for the time to come?* By this we are not to understand merely the fact recorded in the foregoing verse, but the doctrine of the whole preceding context as to the vocation and mission of Israel and his actual condition. God had appointed

him to be a source or at least a medium of light and blessing to the nations; but instead of acting up to this high character, he not only left the nations without light, but was wilfully blinded and insensible himself. Yet God would still be true to his engagements, and put honour on the special revelation which he had already given. Why, then, it might be asked, was Israel suffered to fall before his enemies? The answer to this question is introduced by an indirect caution to consider it and bear it in mind. The interrogative form implies the possibility of their neglecting or refusing to obey it. The last phrase relates either to the time of hearing (*henceforth or hereafter*) or the subject of the declarations to be heard (*concerning the future*).

24. *Who has given Jacob for a prey, and Israel to spoilers? Has not Jehovah, against whom we have sinned, and they were not willing in his ways to walk, and did not hearken to his law?* This was what they were to bear in mind, viz. that what they suffered was ordained of God and on account of their iniquities. The errors of which this verse is the negation are those of supposing that they suffered without fault, and that they suffered, as it were, in spite of God's protection, or because he was unable to prevent it. The interrogation makes the statement more emphatic: Who else can be imagined to have done it, or for what other cause except our sins? The change of person in the last clause is a common Hebrew idiom and does not seem to be significant. If the Prophet identifies himself with the people in the first phrase, he cannot be supposed to exclude himself in that which follows. This verse is strictly applicable to the sufferings of the Jews in Babylon, and it was no doubt so applied by them; but in itself it is a general declaration which has been often verified and was especially exemplified in ancient Israel, viz. that the sufferings even of God's people are the consequence of sin.

25. *And he (Jehovah) poured upon him (Israel) fury, (even) his wrath and the strength (or violence) of war : and it set him on fire round about, and he knew (it) not ; and it burned him, and he wist not lay it to heart.* This continues and concludes the description of God's judgments and of Israel's insensibility. *He knew not* does not here mean *unawares*, without his knowledge, but, as the parallel clause shows, implies extreme insensibility. The translation of the last verb as a preterite is ungrammatical, and the assimilation of the two as presents quite gratuitous. That a preterite precedes, instead of showing that the future must refer to past time, shows the contrary, by leaving us unable to account for the difference of form if none of meaning was intended. However necessary such assimilations may be elsewhere, they are inadmissible in cases like the present, where the change of tense admits of an easy explanation, to wit, that the writer intended to describe the people, not only as having been insensible before, but as likely to continue so in time to come. On the usage of the phrase *to put* or *lay upon the heart*, see above, p. 97.

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## CHAPTER XLIII.

THE main subject of this chapter is the true relation of Israel to Jehovah, and its application in the way both of warning and encouragement. The doctrine taught is that their segregation from the rest of men, as a peculiar people, was an act of sovereignty, independent of all merit in themselves, and not even intended for their benefit exclusively, but for the accomplishment of God's gracious purposes respecting men in general. The inferences drawn from this fact are, that Israel would certainly escape the dangers which environed him however imminent, and on the other hand that he must suffer for his unfaith-

fulness to God. In illustration of these truths, the Prophet introduces several historical allusions and specific prophecies, the most striking of the former having respect to the exodus from Egypt, and of the latter to the fall of Babylon. It is important to the just interpretation of the chapter that these parts of it should be seen in their true light and proportion, as incidental illustrations, not as the main subject of the prophecy, which, as already stated, is the general relation between God and his ancient people, and his mode of dealing with them, not at one time but at all times.

Israel is the peculiar people of Jehovah, cherished and favoured at the expense of other nations, vs. 1-4. But these are one day to become partakers of the same advantages, vs. 5-9. The proofs of the divine protection are afforded by the history of Israel, vs. 10-13. One of the most remarkable, still future, is the downfall of Babylon and the liberation of the exiles, vs. 14, 15. An analogous example in more ancient times was the deliverance from Egypt, vs. 16, 17. But both these instances shall be forgotten in comparison with the great change which awaits the church hereafter, vs. 18-21. Of all these distinguishing favours none was owing to the merit of the people, but all to the sovereign grace of God, vs. 22-25. The people were not only destitute of merit, but deserving of punishment, which they had experienced and must experience again, vs 26-28.

1. *And now, thus saith Jehovah, thy creator, oh Jacob, and thy former, oh Israel, Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine* (literally, *to me art thou*). The juxtaposition of this promise with the very different language at the close of the preceding chapter has led to various false assumptions as to the connection of the passages. The simplest and most satisfactory hypothesis is that, in this whole context, the Prophet is accounting for the sufferings of Israel and his



preservation from destruction on the same ground, namely, that Jehovah had chosen them and therefore would preserve them, but that they were unfaithful and must therefore suffer. The intermingling of the promises and threatenings is not to be explained by supposing a reference to different periods or different subjects; nor is it to be set down as capricious and unmeaning, but as necessary to the Prophet's purpose. The *now* will then have a logical rather than a temporal meaning, as introductory to an explanation of the strange fact that the bush was burned but not consumed. *Creator* and *former* have reference not merely to the natural creation, nor to the spiritual renovation of individuals, but to the creation or constitution of the church. God was the maker of Israel in a peculiar sense. He existed as a nation for a special purpose. *Fear not*, i. e. fear not that thou canst be utterly destroyed. It is not an assurance of immunity from suffering, the experience of which is implied and indeed expressly threatened in what follows. *I have redeemed thee*. There is here an allusion to the redemption of the first-born under the Mosaic law, as appears from the metaphor of substitution used in vs. 3 and 4. Thus understood, the meaning of this clause is, thou art not like the other nations of the earth, for I have purchased or redeemed thee to myself as a peculiar people. *To call by name* includes the ideas of specific designation, public announcement, and solemn consecration to a certain work. This and the other clauses of the verse can be applied to the election and vocation of individuals only by accommodation, or so far as the case of the individual members is included in that of the whole body.

2. *When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be scorched, and the flame shall not burn thee.* Fire and water are common figures for calamity and danger. (See Ps. 66:12.) It is the genius of

the language to delight in short independent clauses, where we use more involved and complicated periods. 'For thou shalt pass through the waters, I will be with thee,' is the idiomatic Hebrew mode of saying, If or when thou passest, etc. The last clause might be rendered, when thou *walkest in the fire*, the preposition *through* being used even in the first clause only because the English idiom requires it after *pass*. The common version of the last words, *shall not kindle upon thee*, is of doubtful authority, and seems to introduce a needless anticlimax, as burning is much more than kindling. The application of this promise to individual believers is an accommodation, but one justified by the natural relation between the body and its several members.

3. *For I, Jehovah, thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour, have given (as) thy ransom Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba, instead of thee.* This is an amplification of the phrase *I have redeemed thee* in v. 1. As the Israelite under the Mosaic law was obliged to redeem his first-born by the payment of a price, or by the substitution of some other object, so Jehovah secured Israel as his own by giving up the other nations, here represented by a single group, just as the forest-trees are represented in ch. 41 : 19 by a few well-known species. The group here selected is composed of three contiguous and kindred nations. *Cush*, which was placed by the older writers either wholly or partly in Arabia, is admitted by the moderns to be coincident with the *Ethiopia* of the Greek geographers. *Seba* is now commonly supposed, on the authority of Josephus, to be Meroe, a part of Ethiopia surrounded by the branches of the Nile, and celebrated by the ancient writers for its wealth and commerce. The connection of the countries was not only geographical but genealogical. According to Gen. 10 : 6, 7, Cush was the brother of Mizraim and the father of Seba. According to this exegetical hypothesis, the same essential meaning might have been conveyed by the mention of any other group of nations. At the same time

it may be admitted that the mention of Egypt was probably suggested by its intimate connection with the history of Israel, and by its actual sacrifice, in some sort, to the safety of the latter at the period of the exodus. Many interpreters go further and suppose that the words would have been applicable to no other nations than those specifically mentioned, and that the Prophet here alludes to the real or anticipated conquest of these countries by Cyrus, as a sort of compensation for the loss of Israel. But the necessity of this prosaic explanation is precluded by the prophetic usage of specifying individuals as representatives of classes, while the sense thus put upon ransom or atonement is extremely forced and far-fetched. That the terms although specific were designed to have a wider application, may be safely inferred from the generic expressions substituted for them in the next verse. The essential idea of *ransom* here is that of vicarious compensation. The insertion of the substantive verb in the first clause, so as to make it a distinct proposition (*I am Jehovah*), greatly weakens the whole sentence. The description of the speaker in the first clause is intended to conciliate regard to what he says in the other. It was in the character, not only of an absolute and sovereign God, but in that of Israel's God, his Holy One, his Saviour, that Jehovah had thus chosen him to the exclusion of all other nations.

4. *Since thou wast precious in my eyes, thou hast been honoured, and I have loved thee, and will give man instead of thee and nations instead of thy soul (or life).* There is precisely the same ambiguity in *since* as in the Hebrew word. Both expressions may be taken either in a temporal or causal sense. *Because thou wast precious*, or, *from the time that thou wast precious*. The former sense is really included in the latter. If Israel had been honoured ever since Jehovah called him, it is plainly implied that this vocation was the cause of his distinction. The first clause,

as the whole context clearly shows, does not refer to intrinsic qualities, but to an arbitrary sovereign choice. 'Since I began to treat thee as a thing of value, thou hast been distinguished among the nations.' The verse, so far from ascribing any merit to the people, refers all to God. The future (*I will give*) shows that the substitution mentioned in v. 3 did not relate merely to the past but to the future also. *Man* is here used collectively or indefinitely for *other men*, or the rest of men, as in Judg. 16 : 7. Ps. 73 : 5. Job 21 : 33. Jer. 32 : 20. *Thy soul, life, or person*, seems to be an allusion to the usage of the same Hebrew word in the Law, with respect to enumeration or redemption (See Ex. 12 : 4. Lev. 27 : 2.) The general terms of this clause make it wholly improbable that v. 3 has specific and exclusive reference to the nations named there.

5. *Fear not, for I (am) with thee ; from the east will I make (or let) thy seed come, and from the west will I gather thee.* The reference of this verse to the restoration of the Jews from Babylon is not only arbitrary and without foundation, but forbidden by the mention of the west as well as the east. That it refers to any restoration is the more improbable, because the Prophet does not say *bring back* but simply *bring*. The only interpretation which entirely suits the text and context, without supplying or assuming anything beyond what is expressed, is that which makes the verse a promise to the church that she should be completed, that all her scattered members should be ultimately brought together. (Compare John 11 : 52. Rom. 3 : 29. 1 John 2 : 2.) *Thy seed* has reference to Israel or Jacob as the deal object of address.

6. *I will say to the north, Give, and to the south, Withhold not ; let my sons come from far, and my daughters from the end of the earth.* This is a poetical amplification of the promise in the foregoing verse. As it was there declared that God would

bring and gather the whole seed of Israel, so here he represents himself as calling on the north and the south to execute his purpose.

7. *Every one called by my name, and for my glory I have created him; I have formed him, yea I have made him.* The construction is continued from the foregoing verse. ‘My sons and my daughters, even every one called by my name.’ *And I have created him* is a common Hebrew idiom equivalent to *whom I have created*. *For my glory* is emphatic. God had not only made them what they were, but he had done it for his own sake, not for theirs. So likewise he now speaks of their being called by his name, as he did before of his calling them by their name, the latter denoting special designation, the former special authority and right.

8. *He hath brought out the blind people, and there are eyes (to them); and the deaf, and (there are) ears to them.* The two clauses are so constructed as to supply one another’s ellipses. On the whole, the most satisfactory interpretation of the verse is that which understands it as descriptive of the change wrought or to be wrought in the condition of mankind by Jehovah, through the agency of his people, whether the latter be expressly mentioned here or not. *He* (i. e. God, or Israel as his messenger) *hath brought out a people* (once) *blind, and* (now) *they have eyes, and* (once) *deaf, and* (now) *they have ears*, i. e. seeing eyes and hearing ears. This agrees perfectly with all that goes before and follows as to the mission and vocation of God’s people.

9. *All the nations are gathered together, and the peoples are to be assembled. Who among them will declare this and let us hear the first things? Let them give (or produce) their witnesses and be justified; and (if they cannot do this) let them hear (my witnesses)*

*and say, (It is) the truth.* The nations have been gathered, but the process is not yet completed. This gathering of the nations has been commonly explained as a judicial metaphor like that in ch. 41 : 1. In that case the verse describes the heathen as assembled at the judgment-seat to plead their cause against Jehovah. This agrees well with the forensic terms employed in the subsequent context. It is possible, however, that this first clause may have been intended to describe not the process but the subject of adjudication. The gathering of the nations will then denote their accession to the church, as predicted in vs 5-7; and *this*, in the next clause, will refer to the same event. Who among them (i. e. the nations) could have foretold their own change of condition? On the other supposition, *this* must either be indefinite, or mean the restoration of the Jews from exile, of which, as we have seen, there is no specific mention in the foregoing context. In either case, the usual alternative is offered, viz that of pointing out some previous instance of foreknowledge and prediction. The last clause admits of two constructions. It may either be read, let them be just (or candid) and hear and say it is the truth; or, let them be justified (by the witnesses whom they produce), and (if not) let them hear (my witnesses) and say, it is the truth. The latter seems more natural.

10. *Ye are my witnesses, saith Jehovah, and my servant whom I have chosen, that ye may know and believe me, and may understand that I am He; before me was not formed a god, and after me there shall not be. Ye are my witnesses and (ye are) my servant whom I have chosen (for this very purpose).* The combination of the plural *witnesses* with the singular *servant*, although strange in itself, is in perfect agreement with the previous representations of Israel as both a person and a body politic. *That ye may know* depends upon the words immediately preceding, *whom I have chosen*, and the clause declares the purpose



not only of the testimony here adduced, but of the election and vocation of his servant. The witness to whom God appeals is Israel, his servant, constituted such for the very end that he might know and understand and believe that of which all other nations were entirely ignorant, viz. that Jehovah was He, i. e. the being in question, *the only wise God*, the only infallible foreteller of futurity. Various attempts have been made to explain away the singular expression, *there was no god formed before me*, as an inaccuracy of expression; whereas nothing else could have conveyed the writer's meaning in a form at once sarcastic, argumentative, and graphic. Instead of saying, in a bald prosaic form, all other gods are the work of men's hands, but I am uncreated and exist from all eternity, he condenses all into the pregnant declaration, there was no god manufactured before me, i. e. all other gods were made, but none of them was made before I had a being. There is not even such an incongruity of form as some suppose, a notion resting on the false assumption that *before me* must in this connection mean *before I was formed*, whereas it only means *before I existed*, just as the parallel phrase *after me* does not mean *after I am formed*, but *after I shall cease to exist*. The sarcasm is rendered still more pungent by the use of the divine name, thus bringing into the most revolting contrast the pretended divinity of idols and their impotence; as if he had said, none of these almighty gods were made before I had a being.

11. *I, I, Jehovah, and besides me (or apart from me) there is no Saviour.* In the first clause we may simply supply *am*, as in the English and most other versions, or *am He* from the preceding verse, and in the sense there explained. The exclusive honour here claimed is not merely that of infallible foreknowledge, but of infinite power. Jehovah was able not only to foretell the salvation of his people, but to save them. These

terms are not to be restricted, if applied at all directly, to the final salvation of individual believers. There is evident allusion to the deliverance of Israel as a people from external sufferings or dangers, of which one signal instance is referred to in v. 14 and another in v. 16. At the same time, the doctrine here propounded, or the character ascribed to God, affords a sure foundation for the personal trust of all who have really a place among his people.

12. *I have told and have saved and have declared* (or *let you hear beforehand*), *and there is not among you (any) stranger; and ye are my witnesses, saith Jehovah, and I(am) God.* Having laid claim successively to divine prescience and power, he here combines the two, and represents himself both as the foreteller and the giver of salvation. The emphatic insertion of the pronoun *I* at the beginning of the verse can only be expressed in English by a circumlocution, *it is I that have told* etc.

13. *Also (or even) from the day I am He, and there is no one freeing from my hand; I will do, and who will undo it?* The assonance in the last clause is not in the original, which literally means, *I will act (or make), and who will cause it to return, i. e. reverse or nullify it?* The interrogative form implies negation. A similar expression of the same idea is found in ch. 14 : 27. What is said specifically in the first clause of delivering from Jehovah's power, is extended in the last to all counteraction or reversal of his acts. *From the day* is understood by some as referring to a specific *terminus a quo*, such as the origin of Israel as a nation, the exodus, etc. Others make it indefinite, *of old* or *long since*. But the best interpreters explain it as meaning *since the first day, or since time began*. The words are then universal, both in the extent of power claimed, and in relation to the time of its exercise. Over

every object and in every age the power of Jehovah had been clearly proved to be supreme and absolute.

14. *Thus saith Jehovah, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: For your sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down (or made to descend) fugitives all of them; and the Chaldeans, in the ships their shout (or song)* This is a particular instance of the general protection vouchsafed by Jehovah to his people, and more especially of that providential substitution or redemption, of which we read above in vs 3, 4. The inference before drawn from the general terms of v. 4, that the nations mentioned in v. 3 are only representatives or samples, is confirmed by this explicit mention of the fall of Babylon as an example of the same great truth. The titles added to Jehovah's name are not mere expletives or words of course, but intimate that he would bring this great event to pass in his distinctive character as the Redeemer and the Holy One of Israel. The event, although still future to the writer, is described as past, in reference not only to the purposes of God, but also to the perceptions of the Prophet. As presented to his view by the prophetic inspiration, the destruction of Babylon was just as truly a historical event as that of Pharaoh and his host.

15. *I Jehovah, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King.* This verse may possibly have been intended merely to identify the subject of the one before it. *I sent to Babylon etc. even I, Jehovah, your Holy One etc.* It is simpler, however, and more in accordance with the usage of the language to make this a distinct proposition by supplying the verb of existence. *I am Jehovah, or, I Jehovah (am) your Holy One, or, I Jehovah, your Holy One, (am) the Creator of Israel, your King.* Even in this case, the event predicted in v. 14 is referred to, as the proof of his being what he here asserts.

16. *Thus saith Jehovah, the (one) giving in the sea a way, and in mighty waters a path* As the participle is very commonly employed in Hebrew to denote continued and habitual action, this verse might be regarded as a general description of God's usual control of the elements and conquest of all difficulties. But the terms of the next verse, and the subsequent contrast between old and new deliverances, have led most interpreters to understand this likewise as an allusion to the passage of the Red Sea.

17. *The (one) bringing out chariot and horse, force and strength (literally, strong) ; together they shall lie, they shall not rise ; they are extinct, like tow (or like a wick) they are quenched.* The construction is continued from the foregoing verse, and the first word agrees directly with *Jehovah*. Some understand the verse as having reference to a naval victory of Cyrus over the Chaldeans, others as relating to the destruction of Pharaoh and his host. It is no objection to the latter application that the verb is future, as it denotes not merely the act of lying down, but the state of lying still, and is therefore a poetical equivalent and parallel to *shall not rise*. That something long past is intended, may be gathered from the exhortation of the next verse

18. *Remember not former things, and old things consider not.* As if he had said, why should I refer to ancient instances of God's almighty intervention in behalf of his people, when others equally remarkable are yet to come? Some refer this to the advent of Christ, but most to the fall of Babylon and restoration of the Jews from exile. The necessity of this specific application by no means follows from the express mention of that event in v. 14 ; because, as we have seen, it is there introduced as a single illustration or example of a general truth, which had before been stated, and which may possibly be here

repeated. This supposition is at least sufficient to meet all the requisitions of the text and context.

19. *Behold I (am) doing (something) new, it is now (or yet) to sprout (or germinate); do you not know it? Yes, I will place in the wilderness a way, in the desert streams.* The *now* does not necessarily denote a proximate futurity, but only that the thing is yet to happen, or in other words, that it is something *new*, as distinguished from all former instances. As if he had said, it is still future. The figure of germination implies that as yet there was no appearance of the final issue. (See the same expression in ch 42:9.) *Do you not know it*, i. e. know what it is? Or, *will you not know it*, i. e. are you not willing to be convinced? Or, *shall you not know it*, i. e. is not the event to be attested by your own experience? Not content with having made a way through the sea, he would make one through the desert. Now as this is really a less extraordinary act of power than the other, it would seem to favour the opinion, that v. 16 and the one before us do not relate indefinitely to the exhibition of Jehovah's omnipotence, but specifically to the exodus from Egypt and the restoration of the Jews from exile. Even on this hypothesis, however, the terms of this verse must be understood not as a description of the literal return, but as a figurative representation of deliverance and relief, whereas v. 16 describes a literal deliverance. On the whole, therefore, it is best to take both verses as strong metaphorical descriptions of deliverance from suffering and danger by a direct divine interposition. Even supposing an allusion to the literal journey through the desert, what is said of rivers must be figurative, which makes it probable that the whole sentence is of the same description. Thus understood, the Prophet's language means that God could change the face of nature and control the angry elements in favour of his people; that he had so done in time past, and would again do so in time to come.

20. *The living creature of the field shall honour me, jackals (or wolves) and ostriches ; because I have given in the wilderness waters, and streams in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen.* The change is further described by representing the irrational inmates of the desert as rejoicing in its irrigation. This bold conception makes it still more probable that what precedes does not relate to a literal journey through a literal desert. As the first phrase seems to be a general one, including the two species afterwards mentioned, the translation *beast* is too restricted, and should give way to that which is etymologically most exact, viz. ζῷον, *animal*, or *living creature*. The form is singular, the sense collective. The two species represent the whole class of animals inhabiting the wilderness. (Compare ch. 13:21, 22.) The common version of the last words of this verse is an exact one. *My chosen people* would be otherwise expressed. To the simple designation of *my people*, he adds, by a kind of afterthought, *my chosen or elect*.

21. *The people (or this people) I have formed for myself ; my praise shall they recount (or they are to recount my praise).* Another declaration of the end for which Israel existed as a nation. This brings us back to the main proposition of the chapter, namely, that Jehovah had not only made them what they were, but had made them for the purpose of promoting his own glory, so that any claim of merit upon their part, and any apprehension of entire destruction, must be equally unfounded.

22. *And not me hast thou called, oh Jacob ; for thou hast been weary of me, oh Israel.* Interpreters, almost without exception, give the first Hebrew verb the sense of called upon, invoked or worshipped. There is much, however, to be said in favour of the sense, *thou hast not called me*, I have called thee ; as our Saviour says to his disciples, *ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you* (John 15:16). Having thus far represented the



vocation of Israel as a sovereign act on God's part, he now presents the converse of the same proposition. This construction is further recommended by its accounting for the unusual position of the words at the beginning of the verse, without resorting to the arbitrary supposition that it is characteristic of a later age than that of Isaiah. As if he had said, *it is not I that have been called by you*. According to the usual construction of the first clause, the second may be rendered either *when* or *because* thou wast weary of me. It is not easy to determine whether labour or fatigue is the primary meaning of the word translated *weary*. Sometimes the one idea is more prominent, sometimes the other. In this case both would naturally be suggested, as in the following paraphrase. It is not I that have been called by thee; for so far from manifesting such a preference, thou hast been wearied and disgusted with the labour which attends my service. The indirect construction (that thou shouldst be weary of me) is only admissible in case of exegetical necessity.

23. *Thou hast not brought to me the sheep of thy burnt-offering, and (with) thy sacrifices thou hast not honoured me. I have not made thee serve with oblation, and I have not made thee labour (or wearied thee) with incense.* The whole Mosaic ritual is here represented by an enumeration of some of the principal offerings; the *olah* or general expiation, the *zebahim* or other animal sacrifices, the *minchah* or meal-offering, and the *lebonah* or aromatic fumigation. The Hebrew word includes the goat as well as the sheep, and is therefore correctly rendered in the English Version by the phrase *small cattle*. Of the whole verse there are several distinct interpretations or rather applications. Some place the emphasis upon the pronouns. It is not to me that thou hast offered all this, but to idols. Another class of writers understand the passage strictly as charging the Jews with culpable neglect of the ceremonial law. A third hypothe-

sis applies the passage to the unavoidable suspension of the ceremonial service during the captivity in Babylon, which it supposes to be here urged as a proof that the deliverance of Israel from exile was an act of mercy, not of righteous retribution for their national obedience and fidelity. It is much more obvious to give the words the general and unrestricted meaning which they naturally bear as a description of the people's conduct, not at one time or at one place, but throughout their history. The most satisfactory interpretation of the verse, and that which best agrees with the whole context, is, that it has reference not merely to the outward or material act, but to its moral value and effect. You have not so performed your ceremonial duties as to lay me under any obligation to protect you. You have not really given me your cattle, you have not truly honoured me with sacrifices. The best explanation of the last clause is, I have not succeeded in inducing you to serve me, I have not prevailed upon you to exert yourselves, much less wearied or exhausted you in ceremonial services.

24. *Thou hast not bought for me sweet cane with money, and (with) the fat of thy sacrifices thou hast not drenched me; thou hast only made me serve with thy sins, and made me toil (or wearied me) with thine iniquities.* Sweet cane is mentioned, like the other things with which it stands connected, as a specimen or sample of the whole congeries of ceremonial services. The antithesis between the clauses seems to show that the idea meant to be conveyed in this whole context is, that their external services were nullified by sin. So far from being satisfied or pleased with what they offered, God was only vexed with their transgressions and neglects.

25. *I, I am he blotting out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and thy sins I will not remember.* This is the conclusion to which

all that goes before was meant to lead, to wit, that God's goodness to his people is gratuitous. If they, instead of choosing God and his service, were averse to both; if, instead of pleasing him by their attentions, they had grieved him by their sins; it follows of course that he could still show them favour only by gratuitously blotting out their sins from his remembrance, or in other words, freely forgiving them.

26 *Remind me; let us plead together (or judge one another); state (thy case), that thou mayest be justified.* After asserting, in the foregoing verse, the total want of merit in the people and their dependence upon God's gratuitous compassion, he now, as it were, allows them to disprove his allegation, by reminding him of some forgotten merit on their part. The badness of their case could not have been more strongly or sarcastically stated than in this ironical invitation to plead their own cause and establish their own rights if they could, with a tacit condition, not expressed but implied, that if they could not justify themselves in this way, they should submit to the righteousness of God and consent to be justified by grace.

27. *Thy first father sinned, and thy interpreters rebelled against me.* It may be considered as implied, that all their fathers who had since lived shared in the original depravity, and thus the same sense is obtained that would have been expressed by the collective explanation of *first father*, while the latter is still taken in its strict and full sense as denoting the progenitor of all mankind. *Interpreters*, or organs of communication, is a title given elsewhere to ambassadors (2 Chr. 32:31) and to an interceding angel (Job 33:23). It here denotes all those who, under the theocracy, acted as organs of communication between God and the people, whether prophets, priests, or rulers. The idea therefore, is the same so often expressed elsewhere, that the people, and especially their leaders, were unfaithful and rebellious.

28. *And I will profane the holy chiefs, and will give up Jacob to the curse and Israel to reproaches.* The character just given of the people in all ages is urged not only as a proof that God's compassion must be perfectly gratuitous, but also as a reason for the strokes which they experienced. This last phrase is descriptive of the same persons called *interpreters* in v. 27, namely, all the official representatives and leaders of the holy (i. e. consecrated and peculiar) people.

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## CHAPTER XLIV.

THIS chapter opens, like the fortieth and forty-third, with cheering promises to Israel, followed by reasons for confiding in them, drawn from the wisdom, power, and goodness of Jehovah. The specific promise, which constitutes the theme or basis of the prophecy, is that of abundant spiritual influences and their fruits, not only internal prosperity, but large accessions from without, vs. 1-5. The pledge for the fulfilment of this promise is afforded by the proofs of God's omniscience, as contrasted with all other gods, vs 6-9. The folly of image-worship is then established by two arguments. The first is that idols are themselves the creatures of mere men, vs. 10-14. The other is that they are not only made, and made by man, but made of the very same materials that are constantly applied to the most trivial domestic uses, vs. 15-20. From this demonstration of the power of Jehovah to perform his promise we are now brought back to the promise itself, vs. 21-24. This is again confirmed by an appeal to God's creative power, and illustrated by the raising up of Cyrus as a deliverer to Israel, vs. 25-28.

Here again it is important to the just interpretation of the

passage that we keep in view the true relation which the main theme (the safety and prosperity of Israel) bears to the arguments and illustrations drawn from God's foreknowledge as established by prediction, from the impotence of idols, and the raising up of Cyrus Through all these varied forms of promise and of reasoning there runs a thread uniting them, and this thread is the doctrine of the Church, its origin, its design, and its relation to its Head and to the world around it.

1. *And now hear, Jacob my servant, and Israel I have chosen him* (i. e. whom I have chosen). The transition here is the same as at the opening of the foregoing chapter, and the *now*, as there, has rather a logical than a temporal meaning. For reasons which have been already given, there is no need of supposing that a different Israel is here addressed, viz. the penitent believing Jews in exile; or a different period referred to, namely, that succeeding the calamities before described. It is simply a resumption and continuation of the Prophet's argument, intended to exhibit the true relation between God and his people. The election here affirmed is probably the choice and separation of the church, or God's peculiar people, from the rest of men.

2. *Thus saith Jehovah thy maker and thy former from the womb will help thee; fear not, my servant Jacob, and Jeshurun whom I have chosen.* The simplest construction is to make the words of Jehovah begin with *thy maker*, the transition from the third to the first person being altogether natural and one of perpetual occurrence in Isaiah. *Thy maker will help thee* is equivalent to *I, who am thy maker, will help thee*. But even on the common supposition, that the words of God begin with the second clause, it is better to take *he will help thee* as a short independent clause, parenthetically thrown in to complete the description or to connect it with what follows. *Thus saith thy maker*

*and thy former from the womb—he will help thee—Fear not* etc. The use of these expressions in addressing Israel only shows that the conception present to the writer's mind is that of an individual man. *Jeshurun* occurs only here and in Deut 32 : 15. 33 : 5, 26.

3. *For I will pour waters on the thirsty, and flowing (waters) on the dry (land); I will pour my spirit on thy seed, and my blessing on thine offspring.* This is the grand reason why God's people should not despair. The two clauses explain each other, the *water* of the first being clearly identical with the *spirit* of the second. This is a common figure for influence from above. (See ch. 32 : 15. Ez. 34 : 26. Mal. 3 : 10.) This promise includes all the influences of the Holy Spirit. The ideal object of address is Jacob as the national progenitor, and the Jews themselves are here described as his descendants. Even this, however, does not necessarily exclude the spiritual offspring of the patriarch, who are explicitly referred to in the context.

4. *And they shall spring up in the midst of the grass, like willows on (or by) the water-courses.* This verse describes the effect of the irrigation and effusion promised in the one before it. The subject of the verb is the offspring or descendants of Israel, by whom the blessing was to be experienced. The grass and the willows are separated only by the rhythmical arrangement of the sentence. The simple meaning of the whole verse is, that they shall grow as willows grow among the grass, i. e. in a moist or marshy spot.

5. *This shall say, To Jehovah I (belong); and this shall call on (or by) the name of Jacob; and this shall inscribe his hand (or with his hand), To Jehovah, and with the name of Israel shall entitle.* It is commonly agreed that this verse predicts the accession of the gentiles, whom it represents as publicly pro-



fessing their allegiance to Jehovah and attachment to his people. The act of calling one by name, and that of calling on his name (invoking him), are intimately blended in the Hebrew usage. Most interpreters understand it here as meaning to praise or celebrate. Some understand the last verb to mean *he shall surname himself* (or *be surnamed*), others *he shall name* the name of Jacob in a flattering or respectful manner. Of the intermediate clause there are two ancient explanations, one of which makes it mean *he shall write (with) his hand*, in allusion to the signing of contracts (Jer. 32 : 10. Neh. 9 : 38); the other, *he shall write upon (inscribe) his hand*, in allusion to the ancient custom of marking soldiers, slaves, and other dependents, with the name of their superior, to which there seems to be a reference in Ex. 13 : 9 and Rev. 13 : 16.

6. *Thus saith Jehovah, king of Israel, and his redeemer, Jehovah of Hosts: I (am) first, and I (am) last, and without me there is no God.* This is a description of the God whom the nations, in the preceding verse, are represented as acknowledging. The attributes ascribed to him afford, at the same time, a sufficient reason for confiding in his promises. The terms here used are appropriated to the Lord Jesus Christ in Rev. 1 : 18. 2 : 8. 22 : 13. There is no need of giving to the preposition in the last clause the restricted sense *besides*, which is really included in the usual and strict sense of *without*, i. e. without my knowledge and permission, or without subjection to my sovereign authority. The meaning is not simply, that there is no other true God in existence, but that even the *λεγόμενοι θεοί* (1 Cor. 8 : 5) exist only by his sufferance, and cannot therefore be his equals or competitors.

7. *And who, like me, will call, and tell it, and state it to me, since I placed the ancient people; and coming things and things*

*which are to come will tell to them (or for themselves)?* There is no reason why the interrogation should not be considered as extending through the verse, the rather as a different construction splits the sentence into several, and arbitrarily explains some of the futures as imperatives. The usual construction of the next words is, *let him tell it* etc.; but this imperative meaning is sufficiently implied in the strict translation of the words as interrogative futures, *who will tell it* etc. קָרָא is to call aloud or publicly announce. It differs from the next verb, if at all, by denoting an authoritative call, and suggesting the idea not only of prediction but of creation. דָּבַר is a forensic term meaning *to state a case*. The words *since I placed* etc. are to be connected with בְּמִנִּיךָ, *who can call, as I have done, ever since I placed* etc. To *place* is here to constitute, create, or give existence. Instead of *ancient people* some would read *eternal people*, but refer it simply to the divine purpose or decree of election. Others give it the sense of *everlasting people*, i. e. a people who shall last forever. In all these senses the description is appropriate to Israel, not simply as a nation but a church, the existence and prerogatives of which are still continued in the body of Christ. It may be doubted, however, whether anything more was here intended than a reference to the origin of the human race. (See above, on ch. 42: 5, 6.)

8. *Quake not and fear not; have I not since then let thee hear and told (thee), and are ye not my witnesses? Is there a God without me? And there is no rock, I know not (any).* The alternation of the singular and plural form in reference to Israel, is peculiarly appropriate to an ideal or collective person, and in strict agreement with the usage of the Pentateuch, especially with that of Deuteronomy, in which the same apparent confusion of numbers is not a mere occasional phenomenon, but one of perpetual occurrence. *Since then* may refer to the event mentioned in the preceding verse, viz. the constitution of the

"ancient people" *And ye are my witnesses* is usually construed as an independent clause; but a possible construction is to include it in the question as above. Here, as in many other cases, God is called a Rock, as being the refuge of his people, and the firm foundation of their hopes.

9. *The image-carriers all of them are vanity, and their desired (or beloved) ones are worthless; and their witnesses themselves will not see and will not know, that they may be ashamed.* Having fortified his promise by a solemn affirmation of his own supremacy, in contrast with the ignorance and impotence of idols, he now carries out this contrast in detail. The literal meaning of the first phrase, is *the formers of a graven image*, here put for idols in general. *Vanity* is here to be taken as a negative expression of the strongest kind, denoting the absence of all life, intelligence, and power, and corresponding to the parallel expression *they cannot profit*, i. e. they are worthless. The *desired* or favourite things of the idolaters are the idols themselves, upon which they lavished time, expense, and misplaced confidence. The next phrase is commonly explained to mean, *their witnesses are themselves*, i. e. they are their own witnesses, which may either represent the idols as witnessing against their worshippers, or the worshippers against the idols, or either of these classes against itself. Others connect these words with the following verbs. The meaning then is, that the idolaters who bear witness to the divinity of their idols are themselves blind and ignorant.

10. *Who formed the god and cast the image to no use (or profit)?* Most interpreters regard this as an exclamation of contemptuous surprise, implying that no one in his senses would do so. But it is best to understand what follows as the answer to this question. Having affirmed the worthlessness of idols in general, he now proceeds to prove it from their origin. So far from

being makers, they are made themselves, and *who made them?* This is the precise force of the verse before us. Here as elsewhere there is pungent sarcasm in the application of the name *El* (*Mighty God*) to idols.

11. *Lo, all his fellows shall be ashamed, and the workmen themselves are of men; they shall assemble all of them, they shall stand, they shall tremble, they shall be ashamed together.* The pronoun *his* refers to the idol itself, and by *his fellows* we are to understand all who have anything to do with it, either as manufacturers or worshippers. (Compare Num. 25 : 3. Deut. 11 : 22. 30 : 20. Is 56 : 3, 6. Hos. 4 : 17. 1 Cor. 10 : 20.) *Of men*, i. e. members of the human family or race. The makers of the idol are themselves mere men, and cannot therefore produce anything divine. The senseless idol and its human makers shall be witnesses against each other, and shall all be involved in the same condemnation and confusion.

12. *He has carved iron (with) a graver, and has wrought (it) in the coals, and with the hammers he will shape it, and then work it with his arm of strength. Besides (or moreover), he is hungry and has no strength, he has not drunk water and is faint.* The meaning and construction of several of the words here used have been disputed, but the most probable meaning of the whole verse is the one just expressed in the translation. The common version, *strength of his arms*, is a needless and enfeebling transposition. The true sense of the words is *his arm of strength*. The description in the last clause seems intended to convey these several ideas: that the man who undertakes to make a god is himself a mortal, subject to ordinary human infirmities; that his god is utterly unable to relieve him or supply his wants; and that neither these considerations nor the toil which he must undergo in order to attain his end are sufficient to deter him from his self-tormenting efforts.

13. *He has carved wood, he has stretched a line, he will mark it with the awl (or graver), he will form it with the chisels, and with the compass (or circle) he will mark it, and then make it (or now he has made it) like the structure (i. e. after the model) of a man, like the beauty of mankind, to dwell in a house.* In this verse, as in that before it, the alternation of the preterite and future introduces us into the very midst of the process, and describes it as already begun but not yet finished. This distinctive feature of the passage is destroyed by making all the verbs indiscriminately present. The future at the opening of the second clause may either denote simply that the act described is subsequent to that just mentioned, or it may represent what was just now future as already done, thereby rendering the view of a progressive operation still more vivid. The two markings or delineations mentioned are commonly supposed to have respect to the general dimensions of the figure and then to its precise form and proportions. The meaning of the last words of the verse seems to be that the idol, being like a man in form, is, like a man, to dwell in a house.

14. *To hew him down cedars ; and (now) he has taken cypress and an oak, and has strengthened (i. e. raised it) for himself among the trees of the forest ; he has planted a pine, and the rain shall increase (it, i. e. make it grow).* To show more clearly the absurdity of ascribing deity to material images, he here goes back, not only to their human origin and their base material, but to the very generation of the trees by which the wood is furnished. The particulars are stated in an inverse order. He begins with the felling of the trees, but interrupts himself in order to go still further back to their very cultivation. The essential idea is that man, instead of being the creature, is in some sort the creator of the wood he worships, since it does or may owe its existence to his agency. One of the Hebrew words strictly denotes a species of oak, but the common ver-

tion cypress may be retained, as it yields an appropriate sense, and as botanical precision is in this case of no exegetical importance, since the meaning of the verse would be the same whatever species had been mentioned. The strict sense of *making strong* corresponds exactly to that of *making great* expressed by the last words, both meaning here to cause to grow. Thus understood, the word helps to bring out with more strength and clearness the main idea of the verse, viz. that the idolater not only chooses suitable trees, but plants and raises them for the purpose. It is not necessary to suppose that this is a description of a usual or frequent custom. It is rather an ideal exhibition of the idol-manufacture carried out to its extreme. The last clause is added to complete the picture of the natural origin and growth of that which the idolater adores as superhuman and divine. At the same time it implies the patient perseverance of the devotee, who first does his part and then waits for natural causes to do theirs, and all for the production of an idol!

15. *And it shall be to men for burning (i. e. for fuel), and he has taken of them and warmed himself; yes, he will kindle and bake bread; yes, he will form a god and fall prostrate; he has made it a graven image and bowed down to them.* The future meaning of the first verb is determined by its intimate connection with the last word of the foregoing verse. The Prophet seems designedly to interchange the singular and plural forms, in order to identify with more effect the idol worshipped and the sticks consumed. Hē takes of them (the sticks), kindles a fire, warms himself, bakes bread, then makes a god, and worships, yes, bows down before them (the sticks of wood). The argument of this and the succeeding verses is intended to exhibit the absurdity of worshipping the same material that is constantly applied to the most trivial domestic uses.



16. *Half of it he hath burned in the fire, on half of it he will eat flesh, he will roast and be filled ; yea, he will warm himself and say, Aha, I am warm, I have seen fire.* The indefinite translation *part*, given in the English version, is intended to avoid the incongruity of making two halves and a remainder. But this incongruity has no existence in the original ; because the first and second half of v. 16 are one and the same half, and the other is not introduced until the next verse. The phrase, *on half of it he eats flesh*, may be explained as a pregnant or concise expression of the idea, that over or by means of the fire made with half of it he cooks flesh for his eating. The obscurity of this clause is immediately removed by the addition of the unambiguous words, *he roasts a roast and satisfies himself*. The force of *yea*, both here and in the foregoing verse, appears to be equivalent to that of our expression *nay more*, not only this but also, or moreover. The Hebrew verb in the last clause not only may but must have here its proper meaning, *I have seen* ; because the noun which follows does not denote the *heat* of fire but its *light*, and there could not be a more natural expression of the feeling meant to be conveyed than by referring to the cheerful blaze of a large wood fire. To the indiscriminate translation of the verbs, both in this verse and the next, as descriptive presents, the same objections may be made as in the foregoing context.

17. *And the rest of it (i. e. the other half) he has made into a god, into his graven image ; he will bow down to it, and will worship, and will pray to it, and say, Deliver me, for thou (art) my god.* The consecution of the tenses is the same as in the preceding verse, and has the same effect of fixing the point of observation in the midst of the process. He has kindled his fire, and will use it to prepare his food. He has made his idol, and will fall down and pray to it. The pronoun at the end may be regarded as emphatic and as meaning *thou and thou alone*.

18. *They have not known, and they will not understand, for he hath smeared their eyes from seeing, their hearts from doing wisely.* The combination of the preterite and future makes the description more complete and comprehensive. As the smearing of the eyes is merely a figure for spiritual blindness, it is here extended to the heart, of which it is not literally predicable.

19. *And he will not bring it home to himself (or to his heart), and (there is) not knowledge, and (there is) not understanding to say, Half of it I have burned in the fire, and have also baked bread on its coals, I will roast flesh and eat, and the rest of it I will make to (be) an abomination, to a log of wood (or the trunk of a tree) I will cast myself down.* The essential meaning is, that they have not sense enough to describe their conduct to themselves in its true colours; if they did, they would stand amazed at its impiety and folly. In the form of expression the writer passes from the plural to the singular, i. e. from idolaters in general to the individual idolater. The first phrase does not correspond exactly to the English *lay to heart*, but comprehends reflection and emotion. The construction of the last clause as an explanation or an interrogation has arisen from a wish to avoid the incongruity of making the man call himself a fool or express his resolution to perform a foolish act. But this very incongruity is absolutely necessary to the writer's purpose, which is simply to tell what the infatuated devotee would say of his own conduct if he saw it in its true light. Instead of saying, *I will worship my god*, he would then say, *I will worship a stick of wood, a part of the very log which I have just burned, upon which I have just baked my bread, and on which I am just about to cook my dinner.* The more revolting and absurd this language, the more completely does it suit and carry out the writer's purpose. Hence too the use of the term *abomination*, i. e. object of abhorrence, not in the worshipper's actual belief, but as it would be if his eyes were opened

20. *Feeding on ashes, (his) heart is deceived, it has led him astray, and he cannot deliver himself (or his soul), and he will not say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?* Another statement of the reason why he cannot see his conduct in its just light or describe it in correct terms, viz. because his very mind or heart is deceived, and this because it feeds on ashes. *Feeding on ashes* is a figure for the love and prosecution of unsatisfying objects, analogous to *feeding on wind*, Hos. 12: 1. The word denotes something more than simply to take pleasure in an object, and suggests the idea of choosing it and resting in it as a portion. The features of the last clause have, in part if not exclusively, a potential meaning. It is best perhaps to combine the ideas of unwillingness and inability. The concluding question is equivalent in import to the long speech put into the mouth of the idolater in v. 19. By a *lie* we are to understand that which professes to be what it is not, and thereby deceives the hopes of those who trust in it. (See Jer. 10: 14. Ps. 33: 17.) This description some apply to the idol itself, as if he had said, Is not this, which I carry in my right hand, a deception? But as this makes a part of the interrogation literal and a part metaphorical, most writers give it uniformity by understanding all the terms as figurative: Is not this, about which I am busied, and upon which I am spending strength and labour, a deception? To any one rational enough to ask the question, the reply would be affirmative of course.

21. *Remember these (things), Jacob and Israel, for thou art my servant; I have formed thee, a servant unto me art thou; Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten by me.* Having completed his detailed exposure of the folly of idolatry, or rather of the impotence of idols, as contrasted with the power of God, he now resumes the tone of promise and encouragement with which the chapter opens, and assures the chosen people, here personified as Israel or Jacob, that having been constituted such by Jehovah for a

special purpose, they could not cease to be the objects of his watchful care. *These things* may possibly refer to the immediately succeeding statements, which may then be rendered *that thou art my servant* etc. To most interpreters, however, it has seemed more natural to understand by *these things* the whole foregoing series of arguments against the divinity of idols and in favour of Jehovah's sole supremacy.

22. *I have blotted out, like a cloud, thy transgressions, and, like a vapour, thy sins; return to me, for I have redeemed thee.* As the previous assurances were suited to dispel any doubt or hesitation as to the power of Jehovah, so the one in this verse meets another difficulty, namely, that arising from a sense of guilt. The assurance given is that of entire and gratuitous forgiveness. The analogy of Exodus 32 : 32, 33, would seem to favour an allusion to the blotting out of an inscription or an entry in a book of accounts. The cloud may then be a distinct figure to denote what is transient or evanescent. (See Hos. 6 : 4. 13 : 3 Job 7 : 9. 30 : 15.) Most interpreters suppose the blotting and the cloud to be parts of one and the same metaphor, although they differ in their method of connecting them. The great majority of writers are agreed that the cloud itself is here described as being blotted out, but some suppose an allusion to the height and distance of the clouds as being far beyond man's reach, implying that forgiveness is a divine prerogative. A more usual and natural supposition is that the clouds in general are here considered as intervening between heaven and earth, as sin is expressly said, in ch 59 : 2, to separate between God and his people. This explanation of the metaphor, however, does not exclude the supposition of a reference to the fleeting nature of cloudy vapour, and the ease and suddenness with which it is dispelled by sun or wind. *Cloud* and *vapour* are poetical equivalents. So far as they can be distinguished, either in etymology or usage, the correct dis-

inction is the one expressed in the English Version (*thick cloua and cloud*). *Return unto me* is a phrase descriptive of all the restorations of God's people from their spiritual wanderings and estrangements. The restriction of this phrase and the one which follows it to the restoration of the Jews from exile, is as forced and arbitrary as the future form given to the verb in many versions.

23. *Sing, oh heavens, for Jehovah hath done (it); shout, ye lower parts of the earth; break forth, ye mountains, into song, the forest and every tree in it: for Jehovah hath redeemed Jacob, and in Israel he will glorify himself.* The prediction of glorious and joyful changes, as in many other cases, is clothed in the form of an exhortation to all nature to rejoice. The thing *done* is what is mentioned in the last clause, i. e. the redemption of Israel, including the deliverance from exile in Babylon, but not confined to it. The arbitrary version of the two verbs in the last clause as a preterite and present or a present and a future is in no respect to be preferred to the exact translation as a preterite and a future, expressive of what God had done and would yet do for the chosen people.

24. *Thus saith Jehovah thy redeemer, and thy former from the womb, I Jehovah, making all, stretching the heavens alone, spreading the earth by myself (or who was with me?)* Some refer *thus saith* to the preceding promises, and take all that follows till the end of the chapter as a description of the being who uttered them. Others refer *thus saith* to what follows, supply the verb *am* before *Jehovah*, and regard the last clause of the verse as the divine declaration. A third conceivable construction would restrict it to the closing question, *who (is) with me?* i. e. who can claim equality or likeness with me? *Who (is or was) with me?* implying strong negation and equivalent in meaning to the affirmation, *there was no one with me.*

25. *Breaking the signs of babblers, and diviners he will madden ; turning sages back, and their knowledge he will stultify.* The whole verse is descriptive of Jehovah as convicting all prophets, except his own, of folly and imposture, by falsifying their prognostications. The second noun is commonly translated either *lies* or *liars* ; but it is rather an expression of contempt, denoting praters, vain or idle talkers, and by implication utterers of falsehood. *Signs* are properly the pledges and accompaniments of predictions, but may here be regarded as equivalent to prophecy itself. These are said to be *broken* in the same sense that breaking may be predicated of a promise or a covenant. The effect of course would be to make such prophets seem like fools or madmen. (See 2 Sam. 15 : 31. Hos. 9 : 7.) The restriction of these terms to the false prophets of the Babylonish exile is not only arbitrary, but at variance with the context, which repeatedly contrasts the omnipotence and omniscience of Jehovah with the impotence of idols and the ignorance of heathen prophets. The alternation of the future and participle seems to have a rhythmical design. The distinction may however be, that while the latter signifies habitual or customary action, the former expresses certain futurity and fixed determination.

26. *Confirming the word of his servant, and the counsel of his messengers he will fulfil ; the (one) saying to (or as to) Jerusalem, She shall be inhabited, and to (or as to) the cities of Judah, They shall be built, and her ruins I will raise.* With the frustration of the heathen prophecies is here contrasted the fulfilment of Jehovah's, who is himself represented as securing their accomplishment. The word translated *confirming* has here the same sense as in Jer 29 : 10 33 : 14, viz. that of bringing a promise or prophecy to pass. *His servant* may refer primarily and directly to the writer himself, but considered as one of a class, who are then distinctly mentioned in the other member as



*his messengers.* The specific application of the title of God's servant to the prophets is apparent from 2 Kings 24 : 2. Jer. 29 : 19. 35 : 15. 44 : 4. Most writers make *counsel* a description of prophecy, considered as involving or suggesting counsel and advice with respect to the future. (Compare the similar application of the verb in ch. 41 : 28.) The last clause, beginning with the words *the one saying* might be considered as a more specific designation or description of *his servant*, viz. *the (servant) saying* etc. But this interpretation is precluded by the double repetition of the words in the two succeeding verses and in evident application to Jehovah himself. To raise up the ruins of a city is of course to rebuild it.

27. *The (one) saying to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy floods (or streams).* This may be understood as a description of God's power over nature and the elements, with or without an allusion to the passage of the Red Sea at the exodus. This exposition is strongly recommended by the analogy of ch. 42 : 15. 43 : 16. 50 : 2 51 : 10. That of Jer. 50 : 38. 51 : 36 does not prove that Isaiah's description was designed to have exclusive reference to the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus, but only that this was included in it as a signal instance of God's power to overcome all obstacles, and that the later prophet made a specific application of the words accordingly.

28. *The (one) saying to (or as to) Cyrus, My shepherd, and all my pleasure he will fulfil, and saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built, and (to) the temple, Thou shalt be founded.* It is now universally admitted that this verse has reference to Cyrus the Elder or the Great, the son of Cambyses king of Persia and the grandson of Astyages the Mede, the hero of the Cyropædia and of the first book of Herodotus, the same who appears in sacred history (2 Chr. 36 : 23. Ezra 1 : 1) as the actual restorer of the Jews from exile. He is here called Jehovah's

*shepherd*, which may either be the usual poetical designation of a king, so common in the oldest classics, or a special description of his mission and vocation to gather the lost sheep of the house of Israel. *All my pleasure*, i. e. with respect to the deliverance of the Jews from exile. The construction of the word translated *saying* is obscure and difficult. Some refer it to Cyrus, and understand it as explaining how he was to fulfil Jehovah's pleasure, namely, *by saying* etc. This, on the whole, is the most natural construction, although, like the others, it leaves unexplained the introduction of the copulative particle before the verb, which must either be rendered as in the English Version (*even saying*), or disregarded as an idiomatic pleonasm. The same ambiguity respecting the person of the verb exists in the last clause of this verse as in v. 26.

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## CHAPTER XLV.

THIS chapter contains the same essential elements with those before it, but in new combinations and a varied form. The great theme of the prophecy is still the relation of Israel to God as his chosen people, and to the nations as a source or medium of saving knowledge. This last idea is brought out with great distinctness at the close of the chapter. The proofs and illustrations of the doctrine taught are still drawn from the power of Jehovah, as displayed in the creation of the world, and as contrasted with the impotence of idols. The evidence of prescience afforded by prophecy is also here repeated and enlarged upon. As a particular prospective exhibition both of power and foreknowledge, we have still before us the conquests of Cyrus, which are specifically foretold and

explicitly connected with the favour of Jehovah as their procuring cause, and with the liberation of his people and the demonstration of his deity as their designed effect

As to the order and arrangement of the parts, the chapter opens, in direct continuation of the forty-fourth, with a further prophecy of Cyrus and of his successes, vs. 1-3. These are then referred to the power of God and his design of mercy towards his people, so that all misgivings or distrust must be irrational and impious, vs. 4-13. Then leaving Cyrus out of view, the Prophet turns his eyes to the nations, and declares that they must be subdued, but only in order to be blessed and saved, which is declared to have been the divine purpose and revealed as such from the beginning, vs. 14-25.

1. *Thus saith Jehovah to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held fast, to tread down before him nations, and the loins of kings I will loose; to open before him double doors, and gates shall not be shut.* The words of Jehovah seem to begin regularly with the next verse; but even in this, which is strictly introductory, they are mingled with the Prophet's description of Cyrus, a mode of composition very common in Hebrew, and among the oldest writers, who thought more of the idea than of the form in which it was expressed. The accumulation of descriptive epithets, which is represented as characteristic of these Later Prophecies, arises from the fact that one main object which the writer had in view was to impress upon the reader's mind the attributes of God and of his chosen instruments. Cyrus is here called the Lord's anointed, a designation elsewhere limited, as Calvin says, to the sacerdotal monarchy of Judah, which prefigured Christ in both his offices of priest and king. Most writers understand it here as a synonyme of *king*, derived from Jewish usages, and not intended to indicate anything peculiar in the royalty of Cyrus, except that he was raised up by Jehovah for a special purpose.

Calvin thinks it still more pregnant and emphatic, and descriptive of Cyrus as a representative of Christ in this one thing, that he was instrumentally the saviour or deliverer of Israel from bondage. The treading down of nations is a trait peculiarly appropriate in this case, as the Greek historians give long catalogues of distinct nations subjugated by Cyrus, such as the Medes, Assyrians, Arabians, Cappadocians, Phrygians, Lydians, Carians, Babylonians, etc. To loose the loins of kings is explained by Calvin as meaning to weaken them, because the strength is in the loins; others suppose an allusion to the removal of the sword-belt, as the ancient method of disarming or dismissing from active service. But most of the modern writers are agreed that the words at least include a reference to the ordinary use of the girdle as a part of oriental dress, on which the activity of the wearer and his exercise of strength are in a great degree dependent, as it gathers up and tightens the flowing garments which would otherwise impede his movements. All interpreters admit that while this clause, in its most general sense, is perfectly appropriate to all the fortified places which were attacked by Cyrus, it is specifically and remarkably appropriate to the taking of Babylon. It can scarcely be considered a fortuitous coincidence, that Herodotus speaks of the gates which led to the river as having been left open on the night of the attack; and Xenophon says the doors of the palace itself having been unguardedly opened, the invaders took possession of it almost without resistance. These apparent allusions to particular circumstances and events, couched under general predictions, are far more striking and conclusive proofs of inspiration than the most explicit and detailed prediction of the particular event alone could be.

2. *I will go before thee, and uneven places I will level, doors of brass I will break, and bars of iron I will cut.* The first clause describes the removal of difficulties under the figures used

for the same purpose in ch. 40 : 4. The other clause would seem at first sight to contain an analogous figure ; but it really includes one of those minute coincidences with history, of which we have already had an example in the preceding verse Herodotus and Abydenus say expressly that the gates of Babylon were all of brass. (Compare Ps. 107 : 16.)

3. *And I will give thee treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places, in order that thou mayest know that I Jehovah, the (one) calling thee by name, am the God of Israel.* It is thought by some eminent writers that no conquests have ever been attended with such acquisition of wealth as those of Cyrus Pliny's account of what he obtained from Croesus makes it, according to Brerewood's computation, more than 126,000,000 pounds sterling. The last clause gives a reason why this circumstance is mentioned, namely, in order that Cyrus might be able to identify the being who brought it to pass with the being who foretold it. The same consideration will account for the mention of the name of Cyrus ; so that even if it were a bolder violation of analogy and usage than it is, there would still be a sufficient explanation of it furnished by the divine purpose to exert a direct influence through this prediction upon Cyrus himself. That such an influence was really exerted by the writings of Isaiah is expressly asserted by Josephus, and would seem to be implied in the monarch's solemn recognition of Jehovah as the true God and the author of his own successes (Ezra 1 : 2.)

4. *For the sake of my servant Jacob and Israel my chosen, therefore will I call thee by thy name, I will give thee a title, and thou hast not known me.* Not only for God's glory in the general, but with a view to the promotion of his gracious purposes towards Israel. *Thou hast not known me* may either mean that he was not a follower of the true religion, or that the name

was given long before he did or could know anything of him who gave it. The verb expresses past time not in reference to the date of the prediction, but to that of the fulfilment.

5. *I am Jehovah* (i. e. the eternal, self-existent God) *and there is no other ; except me there is no God ; I will gird thee and thou hast not known me.* What is said before of naming him is here said of girding him, i. e. investing him with royal dignity or personally strengthening him ; both may be included.

6. *That they may know, from the rising of the sun to the west (or to his going down), that there is none without me ; I am Jehovah, and there is no other.* What was said before of Cyrus in particular is now said of men in general, viz. that they must be convinced in this way that the God of Israel is the one true God.

7. *Forming light and creating darkness, making peace and creating evil, I (am) Jehovah doing all these (things).* Some suppose an allusion to the dualism or doctrine of two co-eternal principles as held by the ancient Persians. Others object that the terms are too indefinite, and their general sense too obvious, to admit of this specific application. But this whole passage is characterized by the recurrence of expressions, the generic sense of which seems clear, but which, at the same time, seems to bear and even to require a more specific explanation, unless we choose rather to assume an extraordinary series of fortuitous coincidences. The open doors, the gates of brass, the hidden treasures, are examples of this double sense, if such it may be called, within the compass of three verses. This analogy makes it rather probable than otherwise that in the case before us, while the Prophet's language may be naturally taken as a general description of God's universal power, an allusion was intended to the great distinc-



tive doctrine of the faith in which Cyrus had most probably been educated. For if it cannot be distinctly proved, it can as little be disproved, and is intrinsically altogether credible, that the doctrine of the Zendavesta is as old as Cyrus.

8. *Drop (or distil) ye heavens from above, and let the clouds pour out righteousness; let the earth open, and let salvation and righteousness grow, let her bring (tham) forth together. I Jehovah have created it.* There is a singular *equivoque* in the common version of the first clause, *drop down ye heavens from above*, which might seem to be a call upon the skies to fall, if the sense were not determined by the parallel expression. The prediction of events in the form of a command is peculiarly frequent in Isaiah's later prophecies. The manifestation of God's righteousness, including his fidelity to his engagements, is constantly recognized in Scripture as one chief end of his dispensations.

9. *Woe to (or alas for) him striving with his maker—a potsherd with potsherds of earth. Shall clay say to its former, What art thou doing? and thy work, He has no hands?* Striving with God is not merely active resistance, but opposition of judgment and affection. The second member of the first clause has been very variously construed. The analogy of what precedes would seem to make it mean, *woe to the potsherd (striving) with the potsherds of the earth.* But this is universally agreed to be inadmissible, a proof that the principle of parallelism has its limitations. The Peshito renders it, *a potsherd of (or from) the potsherds of the earth*, thus making the whole phrase a description of the weakness and insignificance of man. This construction is adopted by the modern writers, almost without exception; most of whom, however, give to the preposition its proper sense of *with*, which they suppose to imply likeness and relationship. It seems to

be a just observation that *earth* is not mentioned as the dwelling of the potsherd, but as its material. *What art thou doing* is the common Hebrew formula for calling to account, or questioning the propriety of what one does. (See Job 9: 12. Ecc. 8: 4. Dan. 4: 35.) The last words of the verse have also been the subject of many discordant explanations. Some of the older writers make them a continuation of the same speech: *what art thou doing? and (as for) thy work, it has no hands*, i. e. it is unfinished. But most interpreters agree that *thy work* introduces a new speaker. *And (shall) thy work (say of thee), he has no hands? There are no hands to him*, i. e. he has no power. The absurdity consists in the thing made denying the existence of the hands by which it was itself produced. The essential idea is the same as in ch. 10: 15, but the expression here much stronger, since the instrument is not merely charged with exalting itself above the efficient agent, but the creature with denying the power or skill of its creator. The restriction of this verse, and of those which follow, to the Babylonians, or the Jews in exile, is entirely arbitrary and at variance with the context, which refers to the conquests of Cyrus and their consequences, not as the main subject of the prophecy, but as illustrations of a general truth. The form of speech used by Paul in Rom. 9: 20 (*why hast thou made me thus?*) is not a version but a paraphrase of the one here, in which however it is really included.

10. *Woe to (him) saying to a father, What wilt thou beget, and to a woman, What wilt thou bring forth?* The same idea is again expressed, but in a form still more emphatic and revolting. The incongruities which have perplexed interpreters in this verse are intentional aggravations of the impious absurdity which it describes. The writer's main design is to represent the doubt and discontent of men in reference to God's future dealings with them as no less monstrous than the supposition

of a child's objection to its own birth. Such an objection, it is true, cannot be offered in the case supposed; but in the real case it ought to be held equally impossible. This view of the Prophet's meaning, if correct, of course precludes the explanation of the words as a complaint of weakness or deformity, or an expression of disgust with life, like that in Job 3:20 and Jeremiah 20:14.

11. *Thus saith Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel and his Maker, Ask me (of) the things to come, concerning my sons and concerning the work of my hands ye may command me.* You may ask me concerning things to come, for I am able to inform you; you may trust my children to my own care, for I am abundantly able to protect them. *Command* is a common expression for giving one authority over any thing or person, or in other words committing it to him, and leaving it at his disposal. For the meaning of *work of my hands* as an equivalent to *my children*, or *my people*, see vol. i. p 248.

12. *I made the earth, and man upon it I created; I, my hands, spread the heavens, and all their host commanded.* This is a justification of the claim in the last clause of the foregoing verse, or a statement of the reason why he could be trusted to protect his people, namely, because he was almighty, and had proved himself to be so in creation. The personal pronoun is emphatic in both clauses, as if he had said, *it is I who made*, or, *I (and no other) made* etc. The construction of the second of these pronouns with *my hands* has been variously explained. Some regard the latter as equivalent to an ablative of instrument in Latin: *I with my hands have spread* etc. Others consider it an instance of the idiom which adds the personal pronoun to the suffix for the sake of emphasis: *I, my hands, spread*, i. e. my own hands spread. In such constructions the personal pronoun commonly stands last. A third supposition is that the pronoun

is in apposition with the noun itself, and not so much emphatic as explanatory. *I (that is to say, my hands) have spread.* (Compare Ps. 3: 5. 17: 13, 14. 44: 3. 60: 7.) The last words of the verse admit of two explanations. We may understand the figure as a military one, and give the verb the military sense of *commanding*. Or we may take *host* as a common expression for contents or inhabitants, and understand the verb as meaning *called into existence*. (Compare Ps. 33: 9.) In itself, the former explanation seems entitled to the preference; but it requires the verb to be construed as an indefinite preterite or a present, whereas all the other verbs, though similar in form, relate to a determinate past time, viz. the time of the creation.

13. *I (and no other) raised him up in righteousness, and all his ways will I make straight (or level); (it is) he (that) shall build my city, and my captivity (or exiles) he will send (home), not for reward, and not for hire, saith Jehovah of Hosts.* From the general proof of divine power afforded by creation he descends to the particular exercise of his omnipotence and wisdom in the raising up of Cyrus, who is thus referred to without the express mention of his name, because he had been previously made the subject of a similar appeal, and the Prophet simply takes up the thread which he had dropped at the close of the fifth verse, or perhaps of the seventh. For the sense of *raising up in righteousness* see above, on ch. 41: 2, 25. 42: 6. In this, as well as in the other places, some suppose an allusion to the personal character of Cyrus, which they defend with great warmth against Burnet's remark in his History of the Reformation, that God sometimes uses bad men as his instruments, such as the cruel Cyrus. The statements of Herodotus to this effect they treat as fabulous, and claim full credit for the glowing pictures of the Cyropaedia. This distinction is not only strange in itself, but completely at war with the conclusions of the ablest modern critics and historians. Nor is there the least need of

insisting thus upon the moral excellence of Cyrus, who in either case was just as really a *consecrated* instrument of the divine righteousness as the Medes and Persians generally, who are so described in ch. 13: 3. At the same time allowance must be made for the difference between what Cyrus was before and after he became acquainted with the true religion. (See above, on v. 3.) The figure of straight or level paths has the same sense as in ch. 40: 3. *My city*, i. e. the holy city, Jerusalem, of which Cyrus was indirectly the rebuilder. The form of the verb *send* here used is not unfrequently applied to the setting free of prisoners or slaves. The last clause seems decisive of the question whether ch. 43: 3, 4. should be understood as a general declaration of God's distinguishing affection for his people, disposing him to favour them at the expense of other nations, or as a specific promise that Cyrus should conquer Ethiopia and Egypt, as a compensation for releasing Israel, in which case he could not be said, in any appropriate sense, to have set them free without reward or hire.

14. *Thus saith Jehovah, The toil of Egypt and the gain of Cush and the Sebaïm men of measure unto thee shall pass, and to thee shall they belong, after thee shall they go, in chains shall they pass over (or along); and unto thee shall they bow themselves, to thee shall they pray (saying), Only in thee (is) God, and there is none besides, no (other) God.* The first clause specifies labour and traffic as the two great sources of wealth, here put for wealth itself, or for the people who possessed it. For the true sense of the geographical or national names here mentioned, see above, on ch. 43: 3. In both places they are named by way of sample for the heathen world. To the reasons before given for this interpretation we may here add the general reference to idolaters in v. 16. The meaning *men of measure*, i. e. of extraordinary stature, is determined by the analogy of Num. 13: 32. 1 Chr. 11: 23. 20: 6, and confirmed by the description of the Ethio-

pians in ancient history, Herodotus speaking of them as μέγιστοι ἀνθρώπων ‘the largest of men.’ Their stature is here mentioned to enhance the glory and importance of the conquest. Whether the *chains* are here considered as imposed by their conquerors, or by themselves in token of a voluntary submission, is a question which the words themselves leave undecided. The same thing may be said of the prostration mentioned afterwards, which in itself might be considered as denoting the customary oriental act of obeisance or civil adoration, although usually found in such connections as require it to be taken in a religious sense, which is here further indicated by the addition of the verb to pray. These strong expressions were employed because the explanation was to follow. Instead of saying, *they shall worship God who dwells in thee*, the Prophet makes his language more expressive by saying, *they shall worship thee*; and then immediately explains his own language by adding their acknowledgment, *only in thee is God*, or to give the Hebrew word its full force, *an almighty God*, implying that the gods of other nations were but gods in name. This exclusive recognition of the God of Israel is then repeated in a way which may to some seem tautological, but which is really emphatic in a high degree. The question now presents itself, in what sense the subjection of the nations is here promised. That a literal conquest of Ethiopia and Egypt by the Jews themselves is here predicted, none can maintain but those who wish to fasten on Isaiah the charge of ignorance or gross imposture. The most natural interpretation of the passage is the common one, which makes it a prophecy of moral and spiritual conquests, to be wrought by the church over the nations, and, as one illustrious example, by the Jews’ religion over the heathenism of many countries, not excepting the literal Ethiopia, as we learn from Acts 8:27.

15. *Verily thou art a God hiding thyself, oh God of Israel, the*



*Saviour!* The abrupt transition here has much perplexed interpreters. The most natural supposition is that the verse is an apostrophe, expressive of the Prophet's own strong feelings in contrasting what God had done and would yet do, the darkness of the present with the brightness of the future. If these things are to be hereafter, then oh thou Saviour of thy people, thou art indeed a God that hides himself, that is to say, conceals his purposes of mercy under the darkness of his present dispensations. Let it be observed, however, that the same words, which furnish a vehicle of personal emotion to the Prophet, are in fact a formula of wider import, and contain the statement of a general truth.

16. *They are ashamed and also confounded all of them together, they are gone into confusion (or away in confusion)—the carvers of images.* Unless we assume, without necessity or warrant, an abrupt and perfectly capricious change of subject, this verse must contain the conclusion of the process described in the foregoing context. We might therefore expect to find Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba, introduced again by name; but instead of these, the sentence closes with a general expression, which has already been referred to as a proof that the war in question is a spiritual war, and that the enemies to be subdued are not certain nations, in themselves considered, but the heathen world, the vast mixed multitude who worship idols. These are described as the carvers or artificers of images, which strengthens the conclusion before drawn, that the smith and carpenter and cook and baker and cultivator of ch. 44 : 12-16, are one and the same person, viz. the idolatrous devotee himself.

17. *Israel is saved in Jehovah (with) an everlasting salvation (literally, salvation of ages or eternities); ye shall not be ashamed, and ye shall not be confounded forever (literally, until the ages of eternity), or as the English Version has it, world without end*

This is the counterpart and contrast to the threatening in the verse preceding, upon which it throws some light by showing that the shame and confusion which awaits the idolater is not mere wounded pride or sense of disappointment, but the loss and opposite of that salvation which is promised to God's people, or in other words, eternal perdition. Israel is saved already, i. e. his salvation is secured, not merely *through* the Lord but *in* him, i. e. by virtue of an intimate and vital union with him, as genuine and living members of his body. The general form of this solemn declaration, and the eternity again and again predicted of the salvation promised, seems to show that the Israel of this text and of others like it, is not the Jewish people, considered simply as an ancient nation, but the Jewish people considered as the church of God, a body which has never ceased and never will cease to exist and claim the promises.

18. *For thus saith Jehovah, the creator of the heavens—he is God—the former of the earth and its maker—he established it—not in vain (or not to be empty) did he create it—to dwell in (or to be inhabited) he formed it—I am Jehovah, and there is none besides.* This verse assigns a reason for believing in the threatening and the promise of the two preceding verses, viz that he who uttered them not only made the heavens and the earth, but made them for a certain purpose, which must be accomplished. The only difficulty of construction is the question where Jehovah's words begin, and this admits of several different answers. We may read, *Thus saith Jehovah, The creator of the heavens is God ;* in which case the divine address begins with a formal statement of the argument derived from the creation. Again, we may read, *Thus saith Jehovah, The creator of the heavens is the God who formed the earth.* But most interpreters suppose the beginning of Jehovah's own words to be marked by the introduction of the pronoun of the first person, *I am Jehovah and*

*there is no other.* All that precedes is then to be regarded as a description of the speaker, including two parenthetical propositions, each beginning with the pronoun *He*: *the creator of the heavens (he is God), the former of the earth and its maker (he established it)* The common version of the next clause, *he created it not in vain*, is admissible, but less expressive than the more specific rendering, *he created it not (to be) a waste (or empty)*. In the last clause *Jehovah* is employed as a descriptive title, and is substantially equivalent to *יְהוָה*, which the Prophet uses in a similar connection in v. 22 below.

19. *Not in secret have I spoken, in a dark place of the earth (or in a place, to wit, a land of darkness). I have not said to the seed of Jacob, In vain seek ye me. I (am) Jehovah, speaking truth, declaring rectitudes (or right things).* The doctrine of the preceding verse is no new revelation, but one long ago and universally made known. Some suppose an allusion to the mysterious and doubtful responses of the heathen oracles. The analogy of vs. 1, 2, 3, makes it not improbable that such an allusion is couched under the general terms of the verse before us. Of the next clause there are several distinct interpretations. The oldest and most common makes it mean that God had not required the people to consult him in relation to futurity without obtaining satisfactory responses.

20. *Gather yourselves and come, draw near together ye escaped of the nations. They know not, those carrying the wood, their graven image, and praying to a God (who) cannot save.* In the first clause the idolaters are addressed directly; in the second they are spoken of again in the third person. The challenge or summons at the beginning is precisely similar to that in ch. 41:21 and 43:9. *Escaped of the nations* has been variously explained to mean the Jews who had escaped from the oppression of the gentiles, and the gentiles who had escaped from the

dominion of idolatry. But these last would scarcely have been summoned to a contest. On the whole, it seems most natural to understand the nations who survived the judgments sent by God upon them. The Hebrew phrase is in itself ambiguous. The explanation which agrees best with the whole connection is the one that supposes the idolaters still left (i. e. neither converted nor destroyed) to be the object of address. If there are any still absurd enough to carry about a wooden god and pray to one who cannot save, let them assemble and draw near. *They do not know* is commonly explained to mean *they have no knowledge*; but it is more accordant with the usage of the language to supply a specific object. They do not know it, or, they do not know what they are doing, they are not conscious of their own impiety and folly. The verse contains two indirect reflections on the idols, first, that they are wooden, then, that they are lifeless and dependant on their worshippers for locomotion.

21. *Bring forward and bring near! Yea, let them consult together. Who has caused this to be heard of old, since then declared it? Have not I Jehovah? and there is no other God besides me; a righteous and a saving God, there is none besides me.* The object of the verbs in the first clause, is *your cause or your arguments*, as in ch. 41:21. The change of person in the next clause implies that they are unable or unwilling to accept the challenge, or at least in doubt and hesitation with respect to it. They are therefore invited to deliberate together, or, as some understand it, to take counsel of those wiser than themselves. Instead of waiting longer for their plea, however, he presents his own, in the common form of an interrogation, asking who except himself had given evidence of prescience by explicitly foretelling events still far distant, and of saving power by delivering his people from calamity and bondage. *Have not I Jehovah, and there is no other God besides me? is a*

Hebrew idiom equivalent to the English question, *Have not I, besides whom there is no other God?*

22. *Turn unto me and be saved all ye ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none besides.* From the preceding declarations it might seem to follow that the gentile world had nothing to expect but the perdition threatened in v. 15. But now the Prophet brings to view a gracious alternative, inviting them to choose between destruction and submission, and showing that the drift of the foregoing argument was not to drive the heathen to despair, but to shut them up to the necessity of seeking safety in the favour of the one true God, whose exclusive deity is expressly made the ground of the exhortation. The Hebrew word does not correspond exactly to the English *look*, but denotes the act of *turning round* in order to look in a different direction. The text therefore bears a strong analogy to those in which the heathen when enlightened are described as *turning* from their idols unto God. (See 1 Thess. 1 : 9. Acts 14 : 15. 15 : 19.) *The ends of the earth* is a phrase inclusive of all nations, and is frequently employed in reference to the conversion of the gentiles. (See Ps 22 : 27. 72 : 8. Zech. 9 : 10.) The question whether Christ is to be regarded as the speaker in this passage, is of little exegetical importance. To us, who know that it is only through him that the Father saves, this supposition appears altogether natural ; but it does not follow that any such impression would be made or was intended to be made upon an ancient reader.

23. *By myself I have sworn ; the word is gone out of a mouth of righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me shall bow every knee, shall swear every tongue.* The form of the divine oath elsewhere used is *by my life* or *as I live* (Num. 14 : 21, 28. Deut. 32 : 40). Hence Paul in his quotation of this text (Rom. 14 : 11) uses the formula, Ζῶ ἐγώ, which may be re-

garded as an accurate paraphrase, though not as a rigorous translation. A word, i. e. a promise or prophecy, is said in Hebrew to *return* when it is cancelled or recalled. (See Isaiah 55 : 11.) The kneeling and swearing in the last clause are acts of homage, fealty, or allegiance, which usually went together (1 Kings 19 : 18) and involved a solemn recognition of the sovereignty of him to whom they were tendered. This verse affords a clear illustration of the difference between the act of *swearing to* and *swearing by* another. (Compare ch. 19 : 18.) This text is twice applied by Paul to Christ (Rom. 14 : 11. Phil. 2 : 10), in proof of his regal and judicial sovereignty. It does not necessarily predict that all shall be converted to him, since the terms are such as to include both a voluntary and a compulsory submission, and in one of these ways all without exception shall yet recognize him as their rightful sovereign.

24. *Only in Jehovah have I, says he (or says one), righteousness and strength; unto him shall he (or shall one or shall they) come, and all that were incensed (or inflamed) at him shall be ashamed.* The general meaning evidently is that God alone can justify or give protection.

25. *In Jehovah shall be justified and boast themselves (or glory all the seed of Israel.* This verse is intended to wind up the previous addresses to the gentiles with a solemn declaration of their true relation to the chosen people, as composed of those who really believed and feared God, whether Jews or gentiles. This principle was recognized in every admission of a proselyte to the communion of the ancient church, and at the change of dispensations it is clearly and repeatedly asserted as a fundamental law of Christ's kingdom under every variety of form (See Rom. 10 : 12. Gal. 3 : 28, 29. Col. 3 : 11.)



## CHAPTER XLVI.

INTERPRETERS are strangely divided in opinion as to the connection of this chapter with the context. The arbitrary and precarious nature of their judgments may be gathered from the fact, that some separate the first two verses from the body of the chapter and connect them with the one before it, while others commence a new "cycle" with the first verse of this chapter, and one represents it as an isolated composition, unconnected either with what goes before or follows. Even the older writers, who maintain the continuity of the discourse, appear to look upon the order of its parts as being not so much an organic articulation as a mere mechanical juxtaposition. They are therefore obliged to assume abrupt transitions, which, instead of explaining anything else, need to be explained themselves. All this confusion is the fruit of the erroneous exegetical hypothesis, that the main subject and occasion of these later prophecies is the Babylonish exile and the liberation from it, and that with these the other topics must be violently brought into connection by assuming a sufficiency of types and double senses, or by charging the whole discourse with incoherence. Equally false, but far less extensive in its influence, is the assumption that the whole relates to Christ and to the new dispensation, so that even what is said of Babylon and Cyrus must be metaphorically understood. Common to both hypotheses is the arbitrary and exclusive application of the most comprehensive language to a part of what it really expresses, and a distorted view of the Prophet's themes considered in their mutual relations and connections. The whole becomes perspicuous, continuous, and orderly, as soon as we admit that the great theme of these prophecies is God's designs and dealings with

the church and with the world, and that the specific predictions which are introduced are introduced as parts or as illustrations of this one great argument. By thus reversing the preposterous relation of the principal elements of the discourse, and restoring each to its legitimate position, the connection becomes clear and the arrangement easy.

In confirmation of the general threats and promises with which ch. XLV. is wound up, the Prophet now exhibits the particular case of the Babylonian idols, as a single instance chosen from the whole range of past and future history. They are described as fallen and gone into captivity, wholly unable to protect their worshippers or save themselves, vs. 1, 2. With these he then contrasts Jehovah's constant care of Israel in time past and in time to come, vs. 3, 4. The contrast is carried out by another description of the origin and impotence of idols, vs. 5-7, and another assertion of Jehovah's sole divinity, as proved by his knowledge and control of the future, and by the raising up of Cyrus in particular, vs. 8-11. This brings him back to the same solemn warning of approaching judgments, and the same alternative of life or death, with which the foregoing chapter closes, vs. 12, 13.

1. *Bel is bowed down, Nebo stooping; their images are (consigned) to the beasts and to the cattle. Your burdens are packed up (as) a load to the weary (beast.)* The connection with what goes before may be indicated thus: see for example the fate of the Babylonian idols. Of these two are mentioned, either as arbitrary samples, or as chief divinities. The dignity of these two imaginary deities among the Babylonians may be learned from the extent to which these names enter into the composition of the names of men, both in sacred and profane history. Such are Belshazzar, Belteshazzar, Belcys, Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuzaradan Nabopolassar, Nebonned, etc. Beyond this nothing more is needed for the right interpretation of the passage, where

the names are simply used to represent the Babylonian gods collectively. Although not essential to the general meaning, it is best to give the past tense and the participle their distinctive sense, as meaning strictly that the one has fallen and the other is now falling, in strict accordance with Isaiah's practice, in descriptive passages, of hurrying the reader *in medias res*, of which we have already had repeated instances. The pronoun in *their images* might be supposed to refer to the Babylonians, though not expressly mentioned; but as these are immediately addressed in the second person, it is best to understand the pronoun as referring to Bel and Nebo, who, as heavenly bodies or imaginary deities, are then distinguished from the images which represented them in the vulgar worship. The word translated *burdens* is properly a passive participle used as a noun and meaning your *carried things* (in old English, *carriages*), the things which you have been accustomed to carry in processions or from place to place, but which are now to be carried in a very different manner, on the backs of animals, as spoil or captives. The last verb properly means *lifted up* in order to be carried, but may here be rendered *packed* or *loaded*, though this last word is ambiguous. *Load* does not necessarily denote a *heavy load*, but simply something to be carried.

2. *They stoop, they bow together; they cannot save the load; themselves are gone into captivity.* The first clause may mean that they are now *both* fallen; or *together* may have reference to the other gods of Babylon, so as to mean that not only Bel and Nebo but all the rest are fallen. The last member of the first clause has been variously explained. The most satisfactory interpretation is the one which gives the word *load* the same sense as in v. 1, and applies it to the images with which the beasts were charged or laden. These are then to be considered as distinguished by the writer from the gods which they represented. Bel and Nebo are unable to rescue their own images

THIS agrees well with the remainder of the sentence, *themselves are gone* (or literally *their self is gone*) *into captivity*. This is the only way in which the reflexive pronoun could be made emphatic here without an awkward circumlocution. The antithesis is really between the material images of Bel and Nebo and *themselves*, so far as they had any real existence. The whole god, soul and body, all that there was of him, was gone into captivity. The idea of the conquest and captivity of tutelary gods was common in the ancient east, and is alluded to, besides this place, in Jer. 48 : 7. 49 : 3. Hos. 10 : 5, 6. Dan. 11 : 8, to which may be added 1 Sam. 5 : 1. Whether the Prophet here refers to an actual event or an ideal one, and how the former supposition may be reconciled with the statement of Herodotus and Diodorus, that the great image of Bel at Babylon was not destroyed until the time of Xerxes, are questions growing out of the erroneous supposition that the passage has exclusive reference to the conquest by Cyrus; whereas it may include the whole series of events which resulted in the final downfall of the Babylonian idol worship.

3. *Hearken unto me, oh house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, those borne from the belly, those carried from the womb.* This repetition, analogous to that in ch. 42 : 2, 3, is intended to suggest a contrast between the failure of the idols to protect their worshippers and God's incessant care of his own people. The gods of the heathen had to be borne by them; but Jehovah was himself the bearer of his followers. And this was no new thing, but coeval with their national existence. The specific reference to Egypt or the Exodus is no more necessary here than in ch. 44 : 2, 24. 48 : 8. The carrying meant is that of children by the nurse or parent. The same comparison is frequent elsewhere. (See Num. 11 : 12. Deut. 1 : 31. Ex. 19 : 4. Is. 63 : 9, and compare Deut. 32 : 11, 12. Hos. 11 : 3. Is. 40 : 11.)

4. The figure of an infant and its nurse was not sufficient to express the whole extent of God's fidelity and tenderness to Israel. The first of these relations is necessarily restricted to the earliest period of life, but God's protection is continued without limit. *And to old age I am He* (i. e. the same), *and to gray hair I will bear (you); I have done it and I will carry and I will bear and save (you).* As I have done in time past, so I will do hereafter. The general analogy between the life of individuals and that of nations is sufficiently obvious.

5. *To whom will ye liken me and equal and compare me, that we may be (literally, and we shall be) like?* This is an indirect conclusion from the contrast in the foregoing context. If such be the power of idols, and such that of Jehovah, to whom will ye compare him? The form of expression is like that in ch. 40. 18, 25.

6. *The prodigals (or lavish ones) will weigh gold from the bag, and silver with the rod; they will hire a gilder, and he will make it a god; they will bow down, yea they will fall prostrate.* *From the bag* may be explained either as meaning taken out of the purse, or in reference to the bag of weights, in which sense it is used in Deut 25: 13. Mic. 6: 11. The word translated *rod* is properly a reed, then any rod or bar, such as the shaft of a candlestick (Ex. 25: 31), and here the beam of a balance or the graduated rod of a steelyard. The verse has reference to the wealthier class of idol-worshippers.

7. *They will lift him on the shoulder, they will carry him, they will set him in his place, and he will stand (there), from his place he will not move; yes, one will cry to him, and he will not answer; from his distress he will (or can) not save him.* The idol is not only the work of man's hands, but entirely dependent on him for the slightest motion. No wonder therefore that he cannot

hear the prayers of his worshippers, much less grant them the deliverance and protection which they need.

8. *Remember this and show yourselves men ; bring it home, ye apostates, to (your) mind (or heart).* By this some understand what follows ; but it rather means what goes before, viz. the proof just given of the impotence of idols, the worshippers of which, whether Jews or gentiles, are addressed in this verse as apostates or rebels against God.

9, 10. *Remember former things of old (or from eternity), for I am the Mighty and there is no other, God and there is none like me, declaring from the first the last, and from ancient time the things which are not (yet) done (or made), saying, My counsel shall stand and all my pleasure I will do.* He calls upon them to consider the proofs of his exclusive deity, afforded not only by the nullity of all conflicting claims, but by the fact of his infallible foreknowledge, as attested by the actual prediction of events long before their occurrence. Instead of *for* some read *that*, on the ground that the thing to be believed was his divinity ; the *former things* being cited merely as the proofs of it. Declaring the last from the first, or the end from the beginning, means declaring the whole series of events included between these extremes. *My counsel shall stand*, i. e. my purpose shall be executed. (See ch. 7 : 7. 8 : 10. 14 : 24. 44 : 26.) All the expressions of the ninth verse have occurred before in different combinations. (See ch. 42 : 14. 43 : 18. 45 : 21 etc.)

11. *Calling from the east a bird of prey, from a land of distance the man of his counsel ; I have both said and will also bring it to pass, I have formed (the plan) and will also do it.* From the general assertion of his providence and power, he now passes to that specific proof of it which has so frequently been urged before, viz. the raising up of Cyrus ; but without the mention



of his name in this case, and with an indefiniteness of expression which is perfectly well suited to the general analogy of prophecy, as well as to the views already taken in the exposition of ch. 44 : 28. *Calling* includes prediction and efficiency, not only announcing but calling into being. The point of comparison is not mere swiftness or rapidity of conquest (Hos. 8 : 1. Hab. 1 : 8. Jer. 48 : 40), but rapacity and fierceness. *Man of his counsel* does not mean his counsellor, as it does in ch. 40 : 13, but either the executor of his purpose, or the agent himself purposed i. e. foreordained by God. It is as if he had said, *I am he that calls the man of his counsel*, after which the construction is continued regularly in the first person. The antithesis expressed is that between design and execution.

12. *Hearken to me, ye stout of heart, those far from righteousness.* By an easy and natural association, he subjoins to these proofs of his own divinity, both past and future, a warning to those who were unwilling to receive them. Strength of heart implies, though it does not directly signify, stubbornness or obstinacy and a settled opposition to the will of God. The same persons are described as *far from righteousness*, which some understand as meaning far from rectitude or truth, i. e. deceitful, insincere. But the only natural interpretation is the one which gives the words their obvious and usual sense, as signifying those who are not righteous before God, in other words the wicked, the words *far from* expressing the degree of their depravity.

13. *I have brought near my righteousness, it shall not be far off; and my salvation, it shall not tarry; and I will give (or p.ace) in Zion my salvation, to Israel my glory.* Because righteousness and salvation frequently occur as parallel expressions, most of the modern German writers treat them as synonymous, whereas one denotes the cause and the other the effect, one relates to God and the other to man. The sense in which salvation can

be referred to the righteousness of God is clear from ch. 1:27. The exhibition of God's righteousness consists in the salvation of his people and the simultaneous destruction of his enemies. To these two classes it was therefore at the same time an object of desire and dread. The stout-hearted mentioned in v. 12 were not prepared for it, and, unless they were changed, must perish when God's righteousness came near. The last words admit of two constructions, one of which repeats the verb and makes it govern the last noun (I will give my glory unto Israel); the other makes the clause a supplement to what precedes, I will give salvation in Zion unto Israel (who is) my glory. In illustration of the latter, see ch. 44:23. 62:3. Jer. 33:9. The other construction has more of the parallel or balanced form which is commonly considered characteristic of Hebrew composition. In sense they ultimately coincide, since Israel could become Jehovah's glory only by Jehovah's glory being bestowed upon him.

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## CHAPTER XLVII.

HERE again we meet with the most discordant and unfounded assumptions, as to the connection of this chapter with the context, and arising from the same misapprehension of the general design of the whole prophecy. The following seems to be the true analysis.

Having exemplified his general doctrine, as to God's ability and purpose to do justice both to friends and foes, by exhibiting the downfall of the Babylonian idols, he now attains the same end by predicting the downfall of Babylon itself and of the state to which it gave its name. Under the figure of a royal virgin, she is threatened with extreme degradation and expo-

sure, vs. 1-3. Connecting the event with Israel and Israel's God, as the great themes which it was intended to illustrate, v. 4, he predicts the fall of the empire more distinctly, v. 5, and assigns as a reason the oppression of God's people, v. 6, pride and self-confidence, vs. 7-9, especially reliance upon human wisdom and upon superstitious arts, all which would prove entirely insufficient to prevent the great catastrophe, vs. 10-15.

1. *Come down!* By a beautiful apostrophe, the mighty power to be humbled is addressed directly, and the prediction of her humiliation clothed in the form of a command to exhibit the external signs of it. *Sit on the dust!* This, which is the literal translation of the Hebrew phrase, may be conformed to our idiom either by substituting *in* for *on*, or by understanding the Hebrew noun to denote, as it sometimes does, the solid ground. The act of sitting on the ground is elsewhere mentioned as a customary sign of grief. (See ch. 3 : 26. Lam. 2 : 10. Job 2 : 13.) But here it is designed, chiefly if not exclusively, to suggest the idea of dethronement, which is afterwards expressed distinctly. The next phrase is commonly explained to mean *virgin daughter of Babel* (i. e. *Babylon*), which, according to some, is a collective personification of the inhabitants. Whatever may be the primary import of the phrase, it is admitted upon all hands to be descriptive either of the city of Babylon, or of the Babylonian state and nation. *Sit to the earth!* i. e. close to it, or simply *on* it, the vague sense of the particle being determined by the verb and noun with which it stands connected. *To sit as to a throne* can only mean to sit upon it. *There is no throne.* Some connect this with what goes before, in this way: *sit on the earth without a throne.* But there is no need of departing from the idiomatic form of the original, in which these words are a complete proposition, which may be connected with what goes before by supplying a causal particle: 'sit on the earth for you have now no throne.' *Daugh-*

*ter of Chasdim!* This last is the common Hebrew name for the Chaldees or Chaldeans, the race introduced by the Assyrians, at an early period, into Babylonia. (See ch. 23: 13. Compare also what is said above, on ch. 43: 14) If taken here in this sense, it may be understood to signify the government or the collective members of this race. *Daughter of Chasdim* must of course be an analogous expression to the parallel phrase *daughter of Babel*. *For thou shalt not add (or continue) to be called*, would be the natural and usual conclusion of the phrase; instead of which we have here *they shall not call thee*, which is common enough as an indefinite expression equivalent to a passive, and only remarkable from its combination with the preceding words, although the sense of the whole clause is quite obvious. *Thou shalt not continue to be called (or they shall no longer call thee)* tender and delicate, i. e. they shall no longer have occasion so to call thee, because thou shalt no longer be so. The same two epithets are found in combination Deut. 28: 54, from which place it is clear that they are not so much descriptive of voluptuous and vicious habits as of a delicate and easy mode of life, such as that of a princess compared with that of a female slave. The testimonies of the ancient writers as to the prevalent iniquities of Babylon belong rather to a subsequent part of the description. All that is here meant is that the royal virgin must descend from the throne to the dust, and relinquish the luxuries and comforts of her former mode of life.

2. *Take mill-stones and grind meal!* Even among the Romans this was considered one of the most servile occupations. In the east it was especially the work of female slaves (Ex. 11: 5. Matt. 24: 41.) *Uncover (i. e. lift up or remove) thy veil!* One of the Arabian poets speaks of certain ladies as appearing unveiled so that they resembled slaves, which is exactly the idea here expressed. *Uncover the leg, cross streams!* The only question as to this clause is whether it refers to the fording of

rivers by female captives as they go into exile, or to the halitual exposure of the person, by which women of the lowest class are especially distinguished in the east. The latter explanation is entitled to the preference, not only because we read of no deportation of the Babylonians by Cyrus, but because the other terms of the description are confessedly intended to contrast two conditions of life or classes of society.

3 The same idea of exposure is now carried out to a revolting extreme. *Let thy nakedness be uncovered, likewise let thy shame be seen.* This conveys no new idea, but is simply the climax of the previous description. *I will take vengeance.* The metaphor is here exchanged for literal expressions by so easy a transition that it scarcely attracts notice. The destruction of Babylon is frequently set forth as a righteous retribution for the wrongs of Israel. (See Jer. 50 : 15, 28.) *I will not (or I shall not) meet a man.* The most probable sense of this obscure clause is, *I shall encounter no man*, i. e. no man will be able to resist me. This simple explanation is at the same time one of the most ancient. The whole clause is a laconic explanation of the figures which precede, and which are summed up in the simple but terrific notion of resistless and inexorable vengeance.

4. *Our Redeemer (or as for our Redeemer), Jehovah of Hosts (is) his name, the Holy One of Israel.* The downfall of Babylon was but a proof that the Deliverer of Israel was a sovereign and eternal being, and yet bound to his own people in the strongest and tenderest covenant relation. Thus understood, the verse does not even interrupt the sense, but makes it the clearer, by recalling to the reader's mind the great end for which the event took place and for which it is here predicted. This is a distinct link in the chain of the prophetic argument, by which the fall of Babylon is brought into connection and subordination to the proof of God's supremacy as shown in the protection and salva-

tion of his people That the Prophet speaks here in his own person, is but a single instance of a general usage, characteristic of the whole composition, in which God is spoken of, spoken to, or introduced as speaking, in constant alternation ; yet without confusion or the slightest obscuration of the general meaning.

5. *Sit silent (or in silence), and go into darkness (or a dark place), daughter of Chasdim !* The allusion is to natural and usual expressions of sorrow and despondency. (See Lam. 2 : 10. 3 : 2, 28.) *For thou shalt not continue to be called (or they shall not continue to call thee) mistress of kingdoms.* This is an allusion to the Babylonian empire, as distinguished from Babylonia proper, and including many tributary states, which Xenophon enumerates. In like manner the Assyrian king is made to ask (ch. 10 : 8), *Are not my princes altogether kings ?*

6. *I was wroth against my people ; I profaned my heritage, i e.* I suffered my chosen and consecrated people to be treated as something common and unclean. In the same sense God is said before (ch. 43 : 28) to have *profaned the holy princes*. Israel is called Jehovah's *heritage*, as being his perpetual possession, continued from one generation to another. This general import of the figure is obvious enough, although there is an essential difference between this case and that of literal inheritance, because in the latter the change and succession affect the proprietor, whereas in the former they affect the thing possessed, and the possessor is unchangeable. *And I gave them into thy hand, as my instruments of chastisement. Thou didst not show them mercy, literally place (give or appoint) it to them.* God's providential purpose was not even known to his instruments, and could not therefore be the rule of their conduct or the measure of their responsibility. Though unconsciously promoting his designs, their own ends and motives were entirely corrupt. In the precisely analogous case of the Assyrian, it is



said (ch. 10 : 7), *he will not think so, and his heart not so will purpose, because to destroy (is) in his heart and to cut off nations not a few.* The general charge is strengthened by a specific aggravation. *On the aged thou didst aggravate thy yoke (or make it heavy) exceedingly.* Some understand this of the whole people, whom they suppose to be described as *old*, i. e. as having reached the period of national decrepitude. Others prefer the strict sense of the words, viz. that they were cruelly oppressive even to the aged captives, under which they include elders in office and in rank as well as in age. This particular form of inhumanity is charged upon the Babylonians by Jeremiah twice (Lam. 4 : 16. 5 : 12), and in both cases he connects the word with a parallel term denoting rank or office, viz. priests and princes. The essential meaning of the clause, as a description of inordinate severity to those least capable of retaliation or resistance, still remains the same in either case.

7. *And thou saidst, Forever I shall be a mistress*, i. e. *a mistress of kingdoms*, the complete phrase which occurs above in v. 5. The conjunction has its proper sense of *until*, as in Job 14 : 6. 1 Sam. 20 : 41 ; and the meaning of the clause is, that she had persisted in this evil course *until* at last it had its natural effect of blinding the mind and hardening the heart. *Thou saidst, Forever I shall be a mistress, till (at last) thou didst not lay these (things) to thy heart.* The idea of causal dependence (*so that*) is implied but not expressed. *Laying to heart*, including an exercise of intellect and feeling, occurs, with slight variations as to form, in ch. 42 : 25. 44 : 19. 46 : 8. *Thou didst not remember the end (or latter part, or issue) of it*, i. e. of the course pursued. The apparent solecism of remembering the future may be solved by observing that the thing forgotten was the knowledge of the future once possessed, just as in common parlance we use *hope* in reference to the past, because we hope to find it so, or hope

that something questionable now will prove hereafter to be thus or thus.

8. *And now*, a common form of logical resumption and conclusion, very nearly corresponding to our phrases, this being so, or, such being the case. *Hear this*, i. e. what I have just said, or am just about to say, or both. *Oh voluptuous one!* The common version, *thou that art given to pleasures*, is substantially correct, but in form too paraphrastical. The translation *delicate*, which some give, is inadequate, at least upon the common supposition that this term is not intended, like the kindred ones in v. 1, to contrast the two conditions of prosperity and downfall, but to bring against the Babylonians the specific charge of gross licentiousness. This corruption of morals, as in other like cases, is supposed to have been aggravated by the wealth of Babylon, its teeming population, and the vast concourse of foreign visitors and residents. After all, however, as this charge is not repeated or insisted on, it may be doubted whether the epithet in question was intended to express more than the fact of her abundant prosperity about to be exchanged for desolation and disgrace. *The (one) sitting in security*. The common version, *dweldest*, is much too vague. Sitting seems rather to be mentioned as a posture of security and ease. *The (one) saying in her heart* (or to herself), *I (am) and none besides*, i. e. none like or equal to me. *I shall not sit (as) a widow*. The figure of a virgin is now exchanged for that of a wife, a strong proof that the sign was, in the writer's view, of less importance than the thing signified. The same comparison is used by Jeremiah of Jerusalem (Lam. 1 : 1. Compare Is. 51 : 18-20. 54 : 1, 4, 5). Many interpreters understand widowhood as a specific figure for the loss of a king; but others apply the whole clause to the loss of allies, or of all friendly intercourse with foreign nations. *And I shall not know* (by experience) *the loss of children*. This paraphrastical expression is the nearest

approach that we can make in English to the pregnant Hebrew word. *Bereavement* and *childlessness* may seem at first sight more exact, but the first is not exclusively appropriate to the loss of children, and the last does not suggest the idea of loss at all.

9. *And they shall come to thee.* The form of expression seems to have some reference to the phrase *I shall not know* in the preceding verse. As if he had said, they shall no longer be unknown or at a distance, they shall come near to thee. *These two, or both these (things)* from which she thought herself secure forever. *Suddenly.* The Hebrew word is a noun, and originally means the twinkling of an eye and then a moment, but is often used adverbially in the sense of *suddenly*. That it has the derivative sense here, may be inferred from the addition of the words *in one day*, which would be a striking antelimax if it strictly meant a moment or the twinkling of an eye. *Loss of children and widowhood*, as in the verse preceding, are explained by most interpreters as figures for the loss of king and people. *In their perfection*, literally, *according to it*, i. e. in the fullest measure possible, implying total loss and destitution. *They have come upon thee.* The English Version makes it future like the verb in the preceding clause; but this is wholly arbitrary. According to the principle already stated and exemplified so often, it is best to give the word its proper meaning, and to understand it not as a mere repetition of what goes before, but as an addition to it, or at least a variation in the mode of exhibition. What he at first saw coming, he now sees actually come, and describes it accordingly. *In the multitude of thy enchantments, in the abundance of thy spells (or charms).* The parallel terms, though applied to the same objects, are of different origin, the first denoting primarily prayers or acts of worship. and then superstitious rites; the other specifically meaning bans or spells (from a word signifying *to bind*), with reference

as some suppose, to the outward act of tying magical knots, but as the older writers think, to the restraining or constraining influence supposed to be exerted on the victim or even on the gods themselves. The prevalence of these arts in ancient Babylon is explicitly affirmed by Diodorus Siculus, and assumed as a notorious fact by other ancient writers.

10. *And (yet) thou art (or wast) secure in thy wickedness.* There is no sufficient reason for departing from the wide sense of the last word as descriptive of the whole congeries of crimes with which the Babylonians were chargeable. But neither in the wide nor the restricted sense could their wickedness itself be an object of trust. It is better, therefore, to give the verb the absolute meaning which it frequently has elsewhere, and to explain the whole phrase as denoting that they went on in their wickedness without a fear of change or punishment. The idea of *security in wickedness* agrees precisely with what follows. *Thou hast said, there is no one seeing me*, a form of speech frequently ascribed to presumptuous sinners and unbelievers in the doctrine of providential retribution. (See Ps. 10: 11. 94: 7. Ezek. 8: 12. 9: 9. Job 22: 14.) This, on the other hand, is not a natural expression of specific trust in any form of wickedness. He who relies upon his power or his cunning as a complete protection will be not so apt to say "None seeth me" as to feel indifferent whether he is seen or not. *Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it has seduced thee.* The insertion of the pronoun *it* admits of a twofold explanation. It may mean, *thy very wisdom*, upon which thou hast so long relied for guidance, has *itself* misled thee. But at the same time it may serve to show that wisdom and knowledge are not here to be distinguished but considered as identical. He does not say *they have*, but *it has, seduced thee*. By wisdom and knowledge some understand astronomy and astrology, others political sagacity and diplomatic skill, for which it is inferred that the Babylonians were

distinguished, from the places where their *wise men* are particularly mentioned. (See for example Jer. 50 : 35. 51 : 57.) But in these descriptions of the Babylonian empire, and the analogous accounts of Tyre (Ezek. 28 : 4) and Egypt (Is. 19 : 11), the reference seems not so much to anything peculiar to the state in question, as to that political wisdom which is presupposed in the very existence, much more in the prosperity, of every great empire. The remainder of the verse describes the effect of this perversion or seduction in the same terms that had been employed above in v. 8, and which occur elsewhere only in Zeph. 2 : 15, which appears to be an imitation of the place before us. *And thou saidst* (or *hast said*) *in thy heart*. The indirect construction, *so that thou hast said*, contains more than is expressed, but not more than is implied, in the original. *I am and there is no other*. I am what no one else is; there is no one like me, much less equal to me. (See above, on v. 8.) This arrogant presumption is ascribed to their wisdom and knowledge, not as its legitimate effect, but as a necessary consequence of its perversion and abuse, as well as of men's native disposition to exaggerate the force and authority of unassisted reason. (Compare ch. 5 : 21.)

11. *And (so) there cometh* (or *has come*) *upon thee evil*; with an evident allusion to the use of *wickedness* in the verse preceding, so as to suggest an antithesis between natural and moral evil, sin and suffering, evil done and evil experienced. The common version (*therefore shall evil come*) is not strictly accurate. Most of the modern writers make it present; but the strict sense of the preterite is perfectly consistent with the context and the usage of the Prophet, who continually depicts occurrences still future, first as coming, then as come, not in fact but in vision, both as certain to occur and as historically represented to his own mind. *And there shall fall upon thee* (a still stronger

expression than the one before it, *there shall come upon thee* ruin. According to the modern lexicographers the noun itself means *fall*, but in its figurative application to destruction or calamity. It occurs only here and in Ezek. 7 : 26. *Thou shalt not be able to avert it*, or resolving the detached Hebrew clauses into one English period, *which thou shalt not be able to avert*. The exact meaning of the last word is atone for, expiate, and in this connection, to avert by expiation, whether in the strict sense of atoning sacrifice or in the wider one of satisfaction and propitiation. If we assume a personification of the *evil*, the verb may mean to *appease*, as in Gen. 32 : 20. Prov. 16 : 14. In any case, the clause describes the threatened judgment as inexorable and inevitable. *And there shall come upon thee suddenly a crash*, or as it has been rendered, *a crashing fall*, a common metaphor for sudden ruin, (*which*) *thou shalt not know*. This may either mean, of which thou shalt have no previous *experience*, or of which thou shalt have no previous *expectation*. The former meaning is the one most readily suggested by the words. The latter may be justified by the analogy of Job 9 : 5, *who removeth the mountains and they know not*, which can only mean that he removes them suddenly or unawares.

12. *Stand now!* The word here rendered *now* is not a particle of time but of entreaty, very often corresponding to *I pray*, or *if you please*. In this case it indicates a kind of concession to the people, if they still choose to try the virtue of their superstitious arts which he had already denounced as worthless. *Stand now in thy spells* (or *charms*). Some suppose an allusion to the customary standing posture of astrologers, conjurers, etc. Others understand the verb to mean *stand fast*, be firm and courageous. But the modern writers generally understand it to mean *persist* or *persevere*, which of course requires the preposition to be taken in its usual proper sense of



*in. Persist now in thy spells and in the abundance of thy charms,* the same nouns that are joined above in v. 9. *In which thou hast laboured.* *From thy youth,* may either mean *of old*, or more specifically, since the earliest period of thy national existence. The antiquity of occult arts, and above all of astrology, in Babylon, is attested by various profane writers. Diodorus Siculus indeed derives them from Egypt, and describes the *Chaldees* or astrologers of Babylon as Egyptian colonists. But as this last is certainly erroneous (see above on v. 1), the other assertion can have no authority. The Babylonians are reported by the same and other writers to have carried back their own antiquity, as proved by recorded scientific observations, to an extravagant and foolish length, to which some think there is allusion here in the expression *from thy youth*. *Perhaps thou wilt be able to succeed,* or *help thyself*, the verb commonly translated *profit*. (See above, ch. 44 : 10.) This faint suggestion of a possibility is more expressive than a positive denial.

13. *Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsel,* not merely weary of it, but exhausted by it, and in the very act of using it. By *counsel* we are to understand all the devices of the government for self-defence. *Let now (or pray let) them stand and save thee.* We may take *stand* either in the same sense which it has above in v. 12, or in that of appearing, coming forward, presenting themselves. The subject of the verbs is then defined. *The dividers of the heavens*, i. e. the astrologers, so called because they divided the heavens into houses with a view to their prognostications. The same class of persons is then spoken of as *star-gazers*, an English phrase which well expresses the peculiar force of the Hebrew word followed by the preposition. Some however give the former word its frequent sense of *seers* or prophets, and regard what follows as a limiting or qualifying term, the whole corresponding to the English phrase *star-prophets* i. e. such as prophesy by means of the stars. The next phrase

does not mean *making known the new moons*, for these returned at stated intervals and needed no prognosticator to reveal them. The sense is either *at the new moons*, or *by means of the new moons*, i. e. the changes of the moon, of which the former is the simpler explanation. Interpreters are much divided as to the way in which the remaining words of this verse are to be connected with what goes before.

14. *Behold they are like stubble, fire has burned them* (the Babylonian astrologers). *Behold* brings their destruction into view as something present. He not only prophesies that they shall be burnt, but sees them burning. The comparison with stubble seems intended to suggest that they are worthless and combustible, *whose end is to be burned*. (Heb. 6 : 8.) At the same time a contrast is designed between the burning of stubble and the burning of wood, the former being more complete and rapid than the latter. *They cannot deliver themselves from the hand* (i. e. the power) *of the flame*. The last clause contains a negative description of the fire mentioned in the first. Of this description there are two interpretations. Some understand it to mean that the destruction of the fuel will be so complete that nothing will be left at which a man can sit and warm himself. Others explain it to mean, (*this fire*) *is not a coal (at which) to warm one's self, a fire to sit before*, but a devouring and consuming conflagration. With either of these expositions of the whole clause may be reconciled a different interpretation of the word מִן־הָאֵשׁ proposed by some writers, who give the word the sense which it invariably has in every other place where it occurs, viz. *their bread*. (See Job 30 : 4. Prov. 30 : 25. Ezek. 4 : 13. 12 : 19. Hos. 9 : 4.) The whole expression then means that it is not a common fire for baking bread, or, on the other supposition, that there are not coals enough left for that purpose. The phrase *coal of their bread* presents a harsh and unusual combination, rendered less so however by the use of

both words in ch 44 : 19. The general sense of sudden, rapid, and complete destruction, is not affected by these minor questions of grammatical analysis.

15. *Thus are they to thee*, i. e. such is their fate, you see what has become of them. The words *to thee* suggest the additional idea that the person addressed was interested in them and a witness of their ruin. *With respect to whom thou hast laboured.* This may either mean *with* whom or *for* whom ; or both may be included in the general idea that these had been the object and occasion of her labours. *Thy dealers* (or *traders*) *from thy youth.* This is commonly regarded as explanatory of the foregoing clause. Thus the English Version, *they with whom thou hast laboured, even thy merchants* etc. It then becomes a question whether these are called traders in the literal and ordinary sense, or at least in that of national allies and negotiators ; or whether the epithet is given in contempt to the astrologers and wise men of the foregoing context, as trafficking or dealing in imposture. According to another arrangement we are not to read *and so are thy dealers, or even thy dealers*, but *thy dealers from thy youth* wander each his own way. We have then two classes introduced, and two distinct events predicted. As if he had said, *thy astrologers* etc are utterly destroyed, and as for *thy dealers*, they wander home etc. widely different in fate, but both alike in this, that they leave thee defenceless in the hour of extremity. *Thy traders* may then be taken either in its strict sense as denoting foreign merchants, or in its wider sense as comprehending all, whether states or individuals, with whom she had intercourse, commercial or political. *Each to his own quarter*, side, direction, substantially synonymous with the expression in Ezek. 1 : 9, 12, and other phrases all meaning *straight before him*, without turning to the right hand or the left, *they wander* (or *have wandered*), a term implying not only flight but confusion. *There is no one helping thee*, or still

more strongly, *saving thee*, thou hast no saviour, with particular reference to those just mentioned, who, instead of thinking upon her or bringing her assistance, would be wholly engrossed by a sense of their own danger and the effort to escape it.

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## CHAPTER XLVIII.

FROM his digression with respect to the causes and effects of the catastrophe of Babylon, the Prophet now returns to his more general themes, and winds up the first great division of the Later Prophecies by a reiteration of the same truths and arguments which run through the previous portion of it, with some variations and additions which will be noticed in the proper place. The disproportionate prominence given to the Babylonish exile and the liberation from it, in most modern expositions of the passage, has produced the same confusion and the same necessity of assuming arbitrary combinations and transitions, as in other cases which have been already stated. This is less surprising in the present case, however ; because the Prophet, in the close as in the opening of this first book, does accommodate his language to the feelings and condition of the Jews in exile, though the truths which he inculcates are still of a general and comprehensive nature.

Although Israel is God's chosen and peculiar people, he is in himself unworthy of the honour and unfaithful to the trust, *vs.* 1, 2. Former predictions had been uttered expressly to prevent his ascribing the event to other gods, *vs.* 3-5. For the same reason new predictions will be uttered now, of events which have never been distinctly foretold, *vs.* 6-8. God's continued favour to his people has no reference to merit upon their part, but is the fruit of his own sovereign mercy and in-

tended to promote his own designs, vs 9-11. He again asserts his own exclusive deity, as proved by the creation of the world, by the prediction of events still future, and especially by the raising up of Cyrus, as a promised instrument to execute his purpose, vs. 12-16. The sufferings of Israel are the fruit of his own sin, his prosperity and glory that of God's sovereign grace, vs. 17-19. The book closes as it opened with a promise of deliverance from exile, accompanied, in this case, by a solemn limitation of the promise to its proper objects, vs. 20-22.

It is evident that these are the same elements which enter into all the Later Prophecies, so far as we have yet examined them, and that these elements are here combined in very much the usual proportions, although not in precisely the same shape and order. The most novel feature of this chapter is the fulness with which one principal design of prophecy, and the connection between Israel's sufferings and his sins, are stated.

1. *Hear this*, not exclusively what follows or what goes before, but this whole series of arguments and exhortations. This is a formula by which Isaiah frequently resumes and continues his discourse. *Oh house of Jacob, the (men) called by the name of Israel*, a periphrasis for Israelites or members of the ancient church. *And from the waters of Judah they have come out.* By an easy transition, of perpetual occurrence in Isaiah, the construction is continued in the third person; as if the Prophet, after addressing them directly, had proceeded to describe them to the by-standers. The people, by a natural figure, are described as streams from the fountain of Judah. (Compare ch. 51: 1 and Ps. 68: 27.) Some German writers fasten on this mention of Judah as a national progenitor, as betraying a later date of composition than the days of Isaiah. But this kind of reasoning proceeds upon the shallow and erroneous supposition that the application of this name to the



whole people was the result of accidental causes at a comparatively recent period, whereas it forms part of a change designed from the beginning, and developed by a gradual process, through the whole course of their history. Even in patriarchal times the pre-eminence of Judah was determined. From him the Messiah was expected to descend (Gen. 49 : 10). To him the first rank was assigned in the exodus, the journey through the desert, and the occupation of the promised land. In his line the royal power was first permanently established. To him, though deserted by five sixths of the tribes, the honours and privileges of the theocracy were still continued; so that long before the Babylonish exile or the downfall of the kingdom of the ten tribes, the names of Israel and Judah were convertible, not as political distinctions, but as designations of the chosen people, the theocracy, the ancient church. In this sense, Israelite and Jew were as really synonymous when Isaiah wrote, as they are now in common parlance. *Those swearing by the name of Jehovah*, i. e. swearing by him as their God, and thereby not only acknowledging his deity, but solemnly avouching their relation to him (See above, on ch. 45 : 23.) *And of the God of Israel make mention*, not in conversation merely, but as a religious act, implying public recognition of his being and authority, in which sense the same Hebrew phrase with unimportant variations in its form is frequently used elsewhere. (For examples of the very form which here occurs, see Josh. 23 : 7. Ps. 20 : 8. 45 : 18.) *Not in truth and not in righteousness*, uprightness, sincerity. It is not necessary to infer from these words, that the Prophet's language is addressed to a distinct class of the Jews, or to the Jews of any one exclusive period, his own, or that of the captivity, or that of Christ. The clause is an indirect reiteration of the doctrine so continually taught throughout these prophecies, and afterwards repeated in this very chapter, that God's choice of Israel and preservation of him was no proof



of merit upon his part, nor even an act of mere compassion upon God's part, but the necessary means to an appointed end. The reference therefore here is not so much to individual hypocrisy or unbelief, as to the general defect of worthiness or merit in the body. They were really called by the name of Israel, and that not only by themselves and one another, but by God. Both parts are equally essential, the description of the Jews as the chosen people of Jehovah, and the denial of their merit; for the error into which they were continually falling was the error of sacrificing one of these great doctrines to the other, or imagining that they were incompatible. It was necessary to the Prophet's purpose that the people should never forget either, but believe them both.

2. *For from the Holy City they are called.* The same name is given to Jerusalem below (ch. 51 : 1), and also in the later books (Dan. 9 : 24. Neh. 12 : 1) and the New Testament (Matth. 4 : 5. 27 : 53). It is so called as the seat of the true religion, the earthly residence of God, and the centre of the church. That the reference is not to mere locality is plain from the application of the name to the whole people. The particle at the beginning of this verse has somewhat perplexed interpreters. The safest because the simplest course is to take it in its ordinary sense of *for*, *because*, and to regard it as continuing the previous description, or rather as resuming it after a momentary interruption, for which reason *for* is used instead of *and*. The connection may be thus rendered clear by a paraphrase: 'I speak to those who bear the name of Israel and worship Israel's God, however insincerely and imperfectly; for they are still the chosen people, and as such entitled to rely upon Jehovah.' This last is then descriptive not of a mere professed nor of a real yet presumptuous reliance, but of the prerogative of Israel considered as the church or chosen people, a prerogative not forfeited by their unfaithfulness, so

long as its continuance was necessary to the end for which it was originally granted. The false interpretations of the passage have arisen from applying it directly to the faith or unbelief of individuals, in which case there appears to be an incongruity between the parts of the description; but as soon as we apply it to the body, this apparent incongruity is done away, it being not only consistent with Isaiah's purpose, but a necessary part of it, to hold up the prerogatives of Israel as wholly independent of all merit upon their part. *Jehovah of Hosts (is) his name.* These words are added to identify the object of reliance more completely, as the being who was called the God of Israel and Jehovah of Hosts. At the same time they suggest the attributes implied in both parts of the name. As if he had said, they rely upon the God of Israel, whom they acknowledge as an independent and eternal Being, and the Sovereign of the universe.

3. *The first (or former things) since then I have declared.* That is, I prophesied of old the events which have already taken place. For the sense of the particular expressions, see above on ch 45: 21. 46: 10 There is no abrupt transition here, as some interpreters assume. This verse asserts God's prescience, not absolutely as in other cases, but for the purpose of explaining why he had so carefully predicted certain future events. It can be fully understood, therefore, only in connection with what goes before and follows. *And out of my mouth they went forth.* Some regard this as a proof that *former things* means former prophecies and not events; but even the latter might be figuratively said to have gone out of his mouth, as having been predicted by him. *And I cause them to be heard,* a synonymous expression. *Suddenly I do (them) and they come to pass.* All this is introductory to what follows respecting the design of prophecy. The sense is not simply, I foretell things

to come, but I foretell things to come for a particular purpose which is now to be explained.

4. *From my knowing.* This may either mean *because I knew* or *since I knew*, or the last may be included in the first, as in ch. 43 : 4. *That thou art hard.* This is commonly considered an ellipsis for hard-hearted or stiff-necked ; more probably the latter, as the sense required by the context is not so much that of insensibility as that of obstinate perverseness. The same idea is expressed still more strongly by the following words, *and an iron sinew (is) thy neck ; and thy forehead brass.* The hardening of the face or forehead, which is sometimes used in a good sense (e. g. ch. 50 : 7), here denotes shameless persistency in opposition to the truth.

5. *Therefore I told thee long ago.* This is often the force of the conjunction *and* after a conditional clause or sentence. Because I knew thee to be such, and I told thee, i. e. therefore I told thee. *Before it comes I have let thee hear (it), lest thou say, My idol did them,* i. e. did the things before referred to collectively in the singular. The Hebrew word for *idol*, from the double meaning of its root, suggests the two ideas of an image and a torment or vexation. *My graven image and my molten image ordered them,* i. e. called them into being.

6. *Thou hast heard (the prediction), see all of it (accomplished).* *And ye (idolaters or idols), will not ye declare,* the same word used above for the prediction of events, and therefore no doubt meaning here, will not ye predict something? *I have made thee to hear new things.* He appeals not only to the past but to the future, and thus does what he vainly challenges them to do. There is no need of inquiring what particular predictions are referred to. All that seems to be intended is the general distinction between past and future, between earlier and later

prophecies. *From now, henceforth, after the present time. And (things) kept (in reserve), and thou hast not known them, or in our idiom, which thou hast not known.*

7. *Now they are created* (i. e. brought into existence for the first time) *and not of old, or never before.* The literal meaning of the next words is, *and before the day and thou hast not heard them.* This probably means *before this day* (or *before to-day*) *thou hast never heard them.* The same reason is assigned as before: *Lest thou shouldst say, Behold, I knew them.*

8. *Nay, thou didst not hear ; nay, thou didst not know.* The idiomatic form of this sentence is not easily expressed in a translation, which, if too exact, will fail to show the true connection. Having given the perverseness of the people as a reason why they knew so much by previous revelation, he now assigns it as a reason why they knew so little. These, although at first sight inconsistent statements, are but varied aspects of the same thing. God had told them so much beforehand, lest they should ascribe the event to other causes. He had told them no more, because he knew that they would wickedly abuse his favour. In a certain sense and to a certain extent, it was true that they had heard and known these things beforehand. In another sense, and beyond that extent, it was equally true that they had neither heard nor known them. It was true that they had heard, but it was *also* true that they had not heard. The strict sense of the clause is, *likewise thou hadst not heard, likewise thou hadst not known ;* but as this form of expression is quite foreign from our idiom, *nay* may be substituted, not as a synonyme but an equivalent. The *ya* of the common version fails to indicate the true connection, by suggesting the idea of a climax rather than that of an antithesis, of something more rather than of something different *Likewise of old* (or *beforehand*) *thine ear was not open,* literally

*did not open*, the Hebrew usage coinciding with the English in giving to this verb both a transitive and intransitive sense. (For another clear example of the latter, see below, ch. 60 : 11.) The sense is not, that *because* they would not hear or know what was revealed, God denounced them as traitors and apostates; but that *because* they were traitors and apostates, he would not allow them to hear or know the things in question. *I know thou wilt* (or *I knew thou wouldst*) *act very treacherously*. Some suppose the emphatic repetition of the verb to express certainty rather than intensity, and both may be included, i. e. both would perhaps be unavoidably suggested by this form of expression to a Hebrew reader. *And apostate* (rebel, or deserter) *from the womb was called to thee*, i. e. this name was used in calling thee, or thou wast called. Besides the idiom in the syntax, there is here another instance of the use of the verb *call* or *name* to express the real character. They were so called, i. e. they might have been so, they deserved to be so. (See above, on ch. 1 : 26.) Here, as in ch. 42 : 2, 24, most interpreters explain the *womb* as meaning Egypt, but in all the cases, it seems far more natural to understand this trait of the description as belonging rather to the sign than the thing signified, as representing no specific circumstance of time or place in the history of Israel, but simply the infancy or birth of the ideal person substituted for him.

9. *For my name's sake* Most interpreters explain this as an equivalent but stronger expression than *for my own sake*, for the sake of the revelation which I have already made of my own attributes. This explanation agrees well with the language of v. 11 below. *I will defer my anger*. Literally, *prolong* it; but this would be equivocal in English. The common version. *I will defer my anger*, is approved by the latest writers, and confirmed not only by our familiar use of *long* and *slow*, in certain applications, as convertible terms, but also by the un-

equivocal analogy of the Greek *μακροθυμος* and the Latin *longanimis*. And (for) my praise I will restrain (it) towards thee. The last words of the verse express the effect to be produced, so as not to cut thee off, or destroy thee.

10. *Behold I have melted thee.* This is the original meaning of the word; but it is commonly applied to the smelting of metals, and may therefore be translated *proved* or *tried thee*. And *not with silver*. Some read *as silver*, and others bring out substantially the same sense by rendering it *with* (i. e. in company with) *silver*, or by means of the same process. Apart from these interpretations, which assume the sense *like silver*, the opinions of interpreters have been divided chiefly between two. The first of these explains the Prophet's words to mean, *not for silver* (or money), but gratuitously. This is certainly the meaning of the expression in a number of places; but it seems to be entirely inappropriate when speaking of affliction, which is rather aggravated than relieved by the idea of its being gratuitous, i. e. for nothing. The other explanation, and the one now commonly adopted, takes the sense to be, *not with silver* (i. e. pure metal) as the result of the process. This agrees well with the context, which makes the want of merit on the part of Israel continually prominent. It also corresponds exactly to the other clause, *I have chosen thee* (not in wealth, or power, or honour, but) *in the furnace of affliction*. If the furnace of affliction was designed to have a distinct historical meaning, it probably refers not to Babylon but Egypt, which is repeatedly called an iron furnace. This would agree exactly with the representations elsewhere made respecting the election of Israel in Egypt.

11. *For my own sake, for my own sake, I will do* (what is to be done). This is commonly restricted to the restoration of the Jews from exile; but this specific application of the promise



is not made till afterwards. The terms are comprehensive and contain a statement of the general doctrine, as the sum of the whole argument, that what Jehovah does for his own people, is in truth done not for any merit upon their part, but to protect his own divine honour. *For how will it be profaned?* This may either mean, How greatly would it be profaned! or, How can I suffer it to be profaned? *And my glory* (or honour) *to another will I not give*, as he must do if his enemies eventually triumph over his own people. The same words with the same sense occur above in ch. 42:8.

12. *Hearken unto me, oh Jacob, and Israel my called; I am He, I am the First, also I the last.* A renewed assurance of his ability and willingness to execute his promises, the latter being implied in the phrase *my called*, i. e. specially elected by me to extraordinary privileges. The threefold repetition of the pronoun *I* is supposed by some of the older writers to contain an allusion to the Trinity. *I am He* is understood by the later writers to mean I am the Being in question, or, it is I that am the First and the Last. The older writers give the pronoun *He* a more emphatic sense, as meaning He that really exists.

13. *Also my hand founded the earth, and my right hand spanned the heavens.* The force of *also* seems to be this: not only am I an Eternal Being, but the Creator of the heavens. *Hand* and *right hand* is merely a poetical or rhetorical variation. In the last clause of the verse the English Version has *when I call*. But in Hebrew usage, the pronoun and participle thus combined are employed to express present and continuous action *I (am) calling* i. e. I habitually call. The words must either be referred to the constant exertion of creative power in the conservation of the universe, or to the authority of the Creator over his creatures as his instruments and servants. *I*

*call to them* (summon them), *and they will stand up together* (i. e. all without exception). This agrees well with the usage of the phrase to *stand before*, as expressing the attendance of the servant on his master. (See for example 1 Kings 17 : 1.) The same two ideas of creation and service are connected in Ps. 119 : 90, 91. The exclusive reference of the whole verse to creation, on the other hand, is favoured by the analogy of Rom. 4 : 17 and Col. 1 : 17. For the different expressions here used, see above, ch. 40 : 22. 42 : 5. 44 : 24. 45 : 12.

14. *Assemble yourselves, all of you, and hear!* The object of address is Israel, according to the common supposition, but more probably the heathen. *Who among them*, i. e. the false gods or their prophets, *hath declared* (predicted) *these things*, the whole series of events which had been cited to demonstrate the divine foreknowledge. *Jehovah loves him*, i. e. Israel, and to show his love, *he will do his pleasure* (execute his purpose) *in Babylon*, and his (Jehovah's) *arm* (shall be upon) *the Chaldees*. This explanation seems to answer all the conditions of the text and context. Most interpreters, however, make the clause refer to Cyrus, and translate it thus: 'he whom Jehovah loves shall do his pleasure in Babylon, and his arm (i. e. exercise his power or his vengeance) on the Chaldees.'

15. *I, I, have spoken* (i. e. predicted); *I have also called him* (effectually by my providence); *I have brought him* (into existence, or into public view); *and he prospered his way*. The subject of the last verb is Cyrus or Israel, and we may understand the phrase as meaning, *he makes his own way prosperous*, i. e. he prospers in it. (Compare Ps. 1 : 3.)

16. *Draw near unto me!* As Jehovah is confessedly the speaker in the foregoing and the following context, and as similar language is expressly ascribed to him in ch. 45 : 19,

some regard it as most natural to make these his words like wise, assuming a transition in the last clause from Jehovah to the Prophet, who there describes himself as sent by Jehovah. Others reconcile the clauses by making Christ the speaker. Those who believe that he is elsewhere introduced in this same book, can have no difficulty in admitting a hypothesis, which reconciles the divine and human attributes referred to in the sentence, as belonging to one person. *Hear this ; not from the beginning in secret have I spoken.* See above, on ch. 45 : 19. *From the time of its being.* Most interpreters refer the pronoun (*it*) to the raising up of Cyrus and the whole series of events connected with it, which formed the subject of the prophecies in question. (See above, ch. 46 : 11.) Since these events began to take place, *I was there.* Those who regard these as the words of Isaiah, understand them to mean that he had predicted them. Those who refer the words to the Son of God specifically, make the verse substantially identical in meaning with the one in Prov. 8 : 27, which the church in every age has been very much of one mind in applying to the second person of the Godhead as the hypostatical wisdom of the Father. Those who take the words more generally as the language of Jehovah, understand him to declare that these events had not occurred without his knowledge or his agency ; that he was present, cognizant, and active, in the whole affair. Thus far this last hypothesis must be allowed to be the simplest and most natural. *And now the Lord Jehovah hath sent me.* Those who regard Isaiah as the speaker in the whole verse understand this clause to mean, that as he had spoken before by divine authority and inspiration, he did so still. Those who refer the first clause simply to Jehovah, without reference to personal distinctions, are under the necessity of here assuming a transition to the language of the Prophet himself. The third hypothesis, which makes the Son of God the speaker, understands both clauses in their strict sense as

denoting his eternity on the one hand and his mission on the other. The sending of the Son by the Father is a standing form of speech in Scripture. (See Ex. 23 : 20. Is. 61 : 1. Mal. 3 : 1. John 3 : 34. 17 : 3 Heb. 3 : 1.) *And his Spirit*. It has long been a subject of dispute whether these words belong to the subject or the object of the verb *hath sent*. The English Version removes all ambiguity by changing the collocation of the words (*the Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me*). The exegetical question is not one of much importance; because both the senses yielded are consistent with the usage of the Scriptures, and the ambiguity may be intended to let both suggest themselves. The main proposition is, *the Lord God hath sent me*. The supplementary expression *and his Spirit* may be introduced, without absurdity or any violation of the rules of syntax, either before the verb or after it. Mere usage therefore leaves the question undecided. As little can it be determined by the context or the parallelisms. The argument, which some urge, that the Spirit is never said to send the Son, takes for granted that the latter is the speaker, an assumption which precludes any inference from the language of this clause in proof of that position. Those on the other hand, who consider these the words of Isaiah, argue in favour of the other construction, that the Spirit is said to send the prophets. On the whole this may be fairly represented as one of the most doubtful questions of construction in the book, and the safest course is either to admit that both ideas were meant to be suggested, although probably in different degrees, or else to fall back upon the general rule, though liable to numberless exceptions, that the preference is due to the nearest antecedent or to that construction which adheres most closely to the actual collocation of the words. The application of this principle in this case would decide the doubt in favour of the prevailing modern doctrine, that Jehovah had sent the person

speaking and endued him with his Spirit, as a necessary preparation for the work to which he was appointed.

17. *Thus saith Jehovah, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel* (see the same prefatory formulas above, ch. 41 : 14. 43 : 14). *I am Jehovah thy God* (or *I Jehovah am thy God*), *teaching thee to profit* (or *I, Jehovah, thy God, am teaching thee to profit*). *To profit*, i. e. to be profitable to thyself, to provide for thy own safety and prosperity. There seems to be a reference to the unprofitableness so often charged upon false gods and their worship. (See ch. 44 : 10 45 : 19. Jer. 2 : 11.) *Leading thee* (literally, *making thee to tread*) *in the way thou shalt go*. The ellipsis of the relative is just the same as in familiar English. The future includes the ideas of obligation and necessity, without expressing them directly; the precise sense of the words is, *the way thou wilt go* if thou desirest to profit.

18. The first verb in the verse is commonly taken in the wide sense of *attending*, that of *listening* being looked upon as a specific application of it. It may be questioned, however, whether there is any clear case of its being used without explicit reference to hearing. If not, this must be regarded as the proper meaning, and the wider sense considered as implied but not expressed. The common explanation of the first clause is, *Oh that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments!* Nothing could well be more appropriate at the close of this division of the prophecies, than this affecting statement of the truth, so frequently propounded in didactic form already, that Israel, although the chosen people of Jehovah, and as such secure from total ruin, was and was to be a sufferer, not from any want of faithfulness or care on God's part, but as the necessary fruit of his own imperfections and corruptions. *Then had thy peace been as the river*, which some understand to mean the Euphrates in particular, with whose inundations,

as well as with its ordinary flow, the Prophet's original readers were familiar. It seems to be more natural, however, to regard the article as pointing out a definite class of objects rather than an individual, and none the less because the parallel expression is *the sea*, which some, with wanton violence, apply to the Euphrates also. *Peace* is here used in its wide sense of prosperity; or rather peace, in the strictest sense, is used to represent all kindred and attendant blessings. The parallel term *righteousness* adds moral good to natural, and supplies the indispensable condition without which the other cannot be enjoyed. The ideas suggested by the figure of a river are abundance, perpetuity, and freshness, to which the waves of the sea add those of vastness, depth, and continual succession.

19. *Then should have been like the sand thy seed*, a common scriptural expression for great multitude, with special reference, in this case, to the promise made to Abraham and Jacob (Gen 22 : 17. 32 : 12), the partial accomplishment of which (2 Sam. 17 : 11) is not inconsistent with the thought here expressed, that, in the case supposed, it would have been far more ample and conspicuous. The image is that of a parent (here the patriarch Jacob) and his personal descendants. *And the issues* (or *offspring*) *of thy bowels* (an equivalent expression to *thy seed*). Of the next word there are two interpretations. Some give it the sense of stones, pebbles, gravel, and make it a poetical equivalent to *sand*. Others make the antithesis between *thy bowels* and *its bowels*, viz. those of the sea; and the whole clause, supplying the ellipsis, will read thus, *the offspring of thy bowels like (the offspring of) its bowels*, in allusion to the vast increase of fishes. *His name*. We must either suppose an abrupt transition from the second to the third person, or make *seed* the antecedent of the pronoun, which is harsh in itself, and rendered more so by the intervening plural forms. All the requisitions of the text are answered by the



common understanding of *name*, in such connections, as equivalent to *memory*. The excision or destruction of the name from before God is expressive of entire extermination. The precise sense of the futures in this clause is somewhat dubious. Most interpreters assimilate them to the futures of the foregoing clause, as in the English Version (*should not have been cut off nor destroyed*). Those who understand the first clause as expressing a wish in relation to the present or the future, make this last a promise, either absolute (*his name shall not be cut off*) or conditional (*his name should not be cut off*). Nor is this direct construction of the last clause inconsistent with the old interpretation of the first; as we may suppose that the writer, after wishing that the people had escaped the strokes provoked by their iniquities, declares that even now they shall not be entirely destroyed. This is precisely the sense given to the clause in the Septuagint, and is recommended by its perfect agreement with the whole drift of the passage and the analogy of others like it, where the explanation of the sufferings of the people as the fruit of their own sin is combined with a promise of exemption from complete destruction.

20. *Go forth from Babel!* This is a prediction of the deliverance from Babylon, clothed in the form of an exhortation to escape from it. We have no right to assume a capricious change of subject, or a want of all coherence with what goes before. The connection may be thus stated. After the general reproof and promise of the nineteenth verse, he recurs to the great example of deliverance so often introduced before. As if he had said, Israel, notwithstanding his unworthiness, shall be preserved; even in extremity his God will not forsake him; even from Babylon he shall be delivered; and then turning in prophetic vision to the future exiles, he invites them to come forth. *Flee from the Chasdim* (or *Chaldees*)! *With a voice of joy*. The last word properly denotes a joyful shout,

and not articulate song. The whole phrase means, with the sound or noise of such a shout. It has been made a question whether these words are to be connected with what goes before or with what follows. *Tell this, cause it to be heard.* The Hebrew collocation (*tell, cause to be heard, this*) cannot be retained in English. *Utter it (cause it to go forth) even to the end of the earth.* Compare ch. 42:10. 43:6. *Say ye, Jehovah hath redeemed his servant Jacob.* The deliverance from Babylon is here referred to, only as one great example of the general truth that God saves his people.

21. *And they thirsted not in the deserts (through which) he made them go. Water from a well he made to flow for them; and he clave the rock, and waters gushed out.* There is evident reference here to the miraculous supply of water in the journey through the wilderness. (Ex. 17:6. Num. 20:11. Ps. 78:15.) It might even seem as if the writer meant to state these facts historically. Such at least would be the simpler exposition of his words, which would then contain a reference to the exodus from Egypt, as the great historical example of deliverance. As if he had said, Relate how God of old redeemed his servant Jacob out of Egypt, and led him through the wilderness, and slaked his thirst with water from the solid rock. Most interpreters, however, are agreed in applying the words to the deliverance from Babylon.

22. *There is no peace, saith Jehovah, to the wicked.* The meaning of this sentence, in itself considered, is too clear to be disputed. There is more doubt as to its connection with what goes before. That it is a mere aphorism, added to this long discourse, like a moral to an ancient fable, can only satisfy the minds of those who look upon the whole book as a series of detached and incoherent sentences. Vastly more rational is the opinion, now the current one among interpreters, that this

verse was intended to restrict the operation of the foregoing promises to true believers, or the genuine Israel; as if he had said, All this will God accomplish for his people, but not for the wicked among them. The grand conclusion to which all tends is, that God is all and man nothing; that even the chosen people must be sufferers, because they are sinners; that peculiar favour confers no immunity to sin or exemption from responsibility, but that even amidst the enjoyment of the most extraordinary privileges, it still remains forever true that "there is no peace to the wicked."

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## CHAPTER XLIX.

THIS chapter, like the whole division which it introduces, has for its great theme the relation of the church to the world, or of Israel to the gentiles. The relation of the former to Jehovah is of course still kept in view, but with less exclusive prominence than in the preceding part (ch. XL-XLVIII). The doctrine there established and illustrated, as to the mutual relation of the body and the head, is here assumed as the basis of more explicit teachings with respect to their joint relation to the world and the great design of their vocation. There is not so much a change of topics as a change in their relative position and proportions.

The chapter opens with an exhibition of the Messiah and his people, under one ideal person, as the great appointed Teacher, Apostle, and Restorer, of the apostate nations, vs. 1-9. This is followed by a promise of divine protection and of glorious enlargement, attended by a joyous revolution in the state of the whole world, vs. 10-13. The doubts and apprehensions

of the church herself are twice recited under different forms vs. 14 and 24 and as often met and silenced, first by repeated and still stronger promises of God's unchanging love to his people and of their glorious enlargement and success, vs. 15-23; then by an awful threatening of destruction to their enemies and his, vs. 25, 26.

1. *Hearken ye islands unto me, and attend ye nations from afar.* Here, as in ch. 41: 1, he turns to the gentiles and addresses them directly. There is the same diversity in this case as to the explanation of אֲרָצֹת. But there seems to be no sufficient reason for departing from the sense of *islands*, which may be considered as a poetical representative of foreign and especially of distant nations, although not as directly expressing that idea. *From afar* is not merely *at a distance* (although this explanation might, in case of necessity, be justified by usage), but suggests the idea of attention being drawn to a central point *from* other points around it. *Jehovah from the womb hath called me, from the bowels of my mother he hath mentioned my name* (or literally, caused it to be remembered). The expression *from the womb* may be either inclusive of the period before birth, or restricted to the actual vocation of the speaker to his providential work. The speaker in this and the following verses is not Isaiah, either as an individual, or as a representative of the prophets generally, on either of which suppositions the terms used are inappropriate and extravagant. Neither the prophets as a class, nor Isaiah as a single prophet, had been intrusted with a message to the gentiles. In favour of supposing that the speaker is Israel, the chosen people, there are various considerations, but especially the aid which this hypothesis affords in the interpretation of the third verse. At the same time there are clear indications that the words are the words of the Messiah. These two most plausible interpretations may be reconciled and blended by assuming that

in this case as in ch. 42: 1, the ideal speaker is the Messiah considered as the head of his people and as forming with them one complex person. If, as we have seen cause to believe, the grand theme of this whole book is the Church, in its relation to its Head and to the World, the anterior presumption is no longer against but decidedly in favour of the reference of this verse to the Head and the Body as one person, a reference confirmed, as we shall see, by clear New Testament authority.

2. *And he hath placed (i. e. rendered or made) my mouth like a sharp sword.* By *mouth* we are of course to understand speech, discourse. The comparison is repeated and explained in the Epistle to the Hebrews (4: 12): "The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." In both cases these qualities are predicated not of literal speech merely, but of the instruction of which it is the natural and common instrument. As tropical parallels, Lowth refers to Pindar's frequent description of his verses as darts, but especially to the famous panegyric of Eupolis on Pericles, that he alone of the orators left a sting in those who heard him. *In the shadow of his hand he hid me.* It has been made a question whether *in the shadow of his hand* means *in his hand* or *under it*; and if the latter, whether there is reference to the usual position of the sword-belt, or to the concealment of the drawn sword or dagger under the arm or in the sleeve. Most interpreters, however, prefer the obvious sense, in the protection of his hand, or rather in its darkness, since the reference is not so much to safety as to concealment. Thus understood, the figure is appropriate not only to the personal Messiah, but to the ancient church, as his precursor and representative, in which high character it was not known for ages to the nations. *And he placed me for* (that is, *rendered me,*

or, *used me as*) a polished arrow. This is the parallel expression to the first member of the other clause. What is there called a sword is here an arrow. The essential idea is of course the same, viz. that of penetrating power, but perhaps with an additional allusion to the directness of its aim and the swiftness of its flight. The common version *shaft* is not entirely accurate, the Hebrew word denoting strictly the metallic head of the arrow. *In his quiver he has hid me.* This is the corresponding image to the hiding in the shadow of God's hand. It is still more obvious in this case that the main idea meant to be conveyed is not protection but concealment. The archer keeps the arrow in his quiver not merely that it may be safe, but that it may be ready for use and unobserved until it is used.

3. *And he (Jehovah) said to me, Thou art my servant*, i. e. my instrument or agent constituted such for a specific and important purpose. In this same character both Israel and the Messiah have before been introduced. There is therefore the less reason for giving any other than the strict sense to the words which follow, *Israel in whom I will be glorified or glorify myself.* The version *I will glory* seems inadequate and not sufficiently sustained by usage. The only supposition which adheres to the natural and obvious meaning of the sentence, and yet agrees with the context, is the one above mentioned, viz. that of a complex subject including the Messiah and his people, or the body with its head.

4. *And I said*, in opposition or reply to what Jehovah said. The pronoun in Hebrew, being not essential to the sense, is emphatic. *In vain* (or *for a vain thing*, i. e. an unattainable object) *have I toiled.* The Hebrew word suggests the idea of exhaustion and weariness. *For emptiness and vanity my strength have I consumed.* *But my right is with Jehovah and my work*



*with my God.* *Work* is no doubt here used in the same sense as in ch. 40 : 10, viz. that of recompense, being put for its result or its equivalent. If so, it is altogether probable that *right* here means that to which I have a right or am entitled, that is to say in this connection, my reward or recompense. This explanation of the term is certainly more natural than that which makes it mean *my cause, my suit*, as this needlessly introduces a new figure, viz. that of litigation, over and above that of labour or service for hire. This clause is universally explained as an expression of strong confidence that God would make good what was wanting, by bestowing the reward which had not yet been realized. *With* therefore means in his possession, and at his disposal. The next verse shows that the failure here complained of is a failure to accomplish the great work before described, viz. that of converting the world.

5. *And now, saith Jehovah, my maker (or who formed me) from the womb, for a servant to himself*, i. e. to be his servant in the sense before explained. The *now* may be here taken either in its temporal or logical sense. *To convert (or bring back) Jacob to him.* This cannot mean to restore from exile; for how could this work be ascribed directly either to the Prophet or the Prophets, or to the Messiah, or to Israel himself? It might indeed apply to Cyrus, but the whole context is at war with such an explanation. All that is left, then, is to give the verb the sense of bringing back to a state of allegiance from one of alienation and revolt. But how could Jacob or Israel be said to bring himself back? This is the grand objection to the assumption that the servant of Jehovah was Israel himself. This is one of the cases where the idea of the head predominates above that of the body, because they are related to each other as the subject and object of one and the same action. The vocation of Israel was to reclaim the nations; that of the Messiah was first to reclaim Israel himself and then the

nations. Some read the next clause as an interrogation, *shall not Israel be gathered?* Others as a concession, *although Israel be not gathered.* Others as a simple affirmation in the present tense, and (yet) *Israel is not gathered.* All that is needed to give this last the preference is the substitution of the future for the present, after which the whole verse may be paraphrased as follows: Thus saith Jehovah, who formed me from the womb as a servant for himself, to restore Jacob to him—and (yet) Israel will not be gathered—and (yet) I shall be honoured in the eyes of Jehovah, and my God has (already) been my strength. The first *yet* introduced to show the true connection is equivalent to saying, though I was called and raised up for this purpose; the other is equivalent to saying, although Israel will not be gathered. This last phrase may be taken as a simple prediction that they should not be gathered, or a declaration that they would not (consent to) be gathered. This last, if not expressed, is implied. The general meaning of the verse is that Messiah and his people should be honoured in the sight of God, although the proximate design of their mission, the salvation of the literal Israel, might seem to fail.

6. *And he said.* This does not introduce a new discourse or declaration, but resumes the construction which had been interrupted by the parenthetical clauses of the foregoing verse. *And now saith Jehovah (who formed me from the womb to be a servant to himself, to restore Jacob to him, and yet Israel will not be gathered, and yet I shall be honoured in the eyes of Jehovah, and my God has been my strength)—he said or says as follows.* It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant. The original form of expression is so purely idiomatic, that it cannot be retained in English. According to the usual analogy, the Hebrew words would seem to mean *it is lighter than thy being my servant*; but this can be resolved into *it is too light for thee to be my servant*, with at least as much ease as a hundred other

formulas the sense of which is obvious, however difficult it may be to account for the expression. The form of expression is anomalous and rare, though not unparalleled, as may be seen by a comparison of this verse with Ezek. 8 : 17. The sense, if it were doubtful in itself, would be clear from the context, which requires this to be taken as a declaration that it was not enough for the Messiah (and the people as his representative) to labour for the natural descendants of Abraham, but he and they must have a wider field. *Thy being to me a servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and the preserved of Israel to restore* This form of expression shows very clearly that in this and the parallel passages *servant* is not used indefinitely, but in the specific sense of an appointed instrument or agent to perform a certain work. That work is here the *raising up* of Jacob, a phrase which derives light from the parallel expression, to *restore* the preserved of Israel, i. e. to raise them from a state of degradation. and to restore them from a state of estrangement. A specific reference to restoration from the Babylonish exile would be gratuitous; much more the restriction of the words to that event, which is merely included as a signal instance of deliverance and restoration in the general. *And I have given thee for a light to the gentiles* (as in ch. 42 : 6), *to be my salvation even to the end of the earth.* This, according to the English idiom, would seem to mean *that thou mayest be my salvation* etc.; but Hebrew usage equally admits of the interpretation, *that my salvation may be* (i. e. extend) *to the end of the earth*, which is in fact preferred by most interpreters. The meaning of this verse is not, as some suppose, that the heathen should be given to him in exchange and compensation for the unbelieving Jews, but that his mission to the latter was, from the beginning, but a small part of his high vocation. The application of this verse by Paul and Barnabas, in their address to the Jews of Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13 : 47) is very important, as a confirmation of the hypothesis assumed above,

that the person here described is not the Messiah exclusively, but that his people are included in the subject of the description. "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken unto you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the gentiles. FOR SO HATH THE LORD COMMANDED US (saying), I have set thee to be a light to the gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." Although this is not irreconcilable with the exclusive Messianic explanation of the verse before us, its agreement with the wider explanation is too striking to be deemed fortuitous.

7. *Thus saith Jehovah, the Redeemer of Israel, his Holy One, to the heartily despised, to the nation exciting abhorrence.* The two epithets in this clause are exceedingly obscure and difficult. *Whom the nation abhorreth, who abhorreth the nation, who excites the abhorrence of the nation, the nation which excites abhorrence,* all these are possible translations of the Hebrew words, among which interpreters choose according to their different views respecting the whole passage. In any case it is descriptive of deep abasement and general contempt, to be exchanged hereafter for an opposite condition. *To a servant of rulers*, one who has hitherto been subject to them but is now to receive their homage. *Kings shall see* (not *him* or *them*, but *it*, viz that which is to happen) *and rise up* (as a token of respect), *princes (shall see) and bow themselves.* *For the sake of Jehovah who is faithful* (to his promises), *the Holy One of Israel, and he hath chosen thee,* or in our idiom *who has chosen thee.* This last clause not only ascribes the promised change to the power of God, but represents it as intended solely to promote his glory.

8. *Thus saith Jehovah, In a time of favour have I heard (or answered) thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee.* The common version, *an acceptable time*, does not convey the sense

of the original, which signifies a suitable or appointed time for showing grace or favour. The object of address is still the Messiah and his people, whose great mission is again described. *And I will keep thee, and will give thee for a covenant of the people,* i. e. of men in general (see above, ch 42 : 7), *to raise up the earth or world from its present state of ruin, and to cause to inherit the desolate heritages,* the moral wastes of heathenism. There is allusion to the division of the land by Joshua. Here again we have clear apostolical authority for applying this description to the Church, or people of God, as the Body of which Christ is the Head. Paul says to the Corinthians, "We then as workers together (with him) beseech you also that ye receive not the word of God in vain. For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee." What follows is no part of the quotation but Paul's comment on it. "Behold, now is the accepted time ; behold, now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. 6 : 2.) This, taken in connection with the citation of v. 6 in Acts 13 : 47, precludes the supposition of an accidental or unmeaning application of this passage to the people or ministers of Christ as well as to himself.

9. *To say to those bound, Come forth ; to (those) who (are) in darkness, Be revealed (or show yourselves). On the ways (or roads) they shall feed, and in all bare hills (shall be) their pasture.* There is here a change of figure, the delivered being represented not as prisoners or freedmen but as flocks. Some read *by the way* or *on their way* homeward ; but it is commonly agreed that the Prophet simply represents the flock as finding pasture even without going aside to seek it, and even in the most unlikely situations. The restriction of these figures to deliverance from Babylon, can seem natural only to those who have assumed the same hypothesis throughout the foregoing chapters.

10. *They shall not hunger and they shall not thirst, and there shall not smite them mirage and sun ; for he that hath mercy on them shall guide them, and by springs of water shall he lead them.* The image of a flock is still continued. (Compare ch. 40 : 10 11, 41 : 18. 43 : 19.) מַדְבָּר is the same word that is now universally explained in ch. 35 : 7 to mean the *mirage*, or delusive appearance of water in the desert. For the true sense of the verb *lead*, see above, on ch. 40 : 11.

11. *And I will place all my mountains for the way, and my roads shall be high.* The image of a flock is now exchanged for that of an army on the march. *My mountains* is by some understood to mean the mountains of Israel ; but why these should be mentioned is not easily explained. Others with more probability explain it as an indirect assertion of God's sovereignty and absolute control, and more especially his power to remove the greatest obstacles from the way of his people. The original expression is not merely *for a way* but *for the way*, i. e. the way in which my people are to go. The word translated *road* is an artificial road or causeway made by throwing up the earth, which seems to be intended by the verb at the close. (Compare the use of *way*, ch. 57 : 14.)

12. *Behold, these from afar shall come ; and behold, these from the north and from the sea, and these from the land of Sinim.* There is not the least doubt as to the literal translation of this verse ; and yet it has been a famous subject of discordant expositions, all of which turn upon the question, what is meant by the *land of Sinim*? In addition to the authors usually cited, respect will here be had to an interesting monograph, by an American Missionary in China,\* originally published in the Chinese Repository, and republished in this country under the title of " The Land of Sinim, or an exposition, of Isaiah 49 : 12,

\* Now understood to be the lamented Walter Macon Lowrie.



together with a brief account of the Jews and Christians in China." (Philadelphia, 1845.) It is well said by this writer, that the verse before us is the central point of the prophetic discourse, of which it forms a part; inasmuch as it embodies the great promise, which in various forms is exhibited before and afterwards. This relation of the text to the context is important, because it creates a presumption in favour of the widest meaning which can be put upon the terms of the prediction, and against a restricted local application. A preliminary question, not devoid of exegetical importance, is the question with respect to the mutual relation of the clauses. The doubtful point is, whether the first clause is a single item in an enumeration of particulars, or a generic statement, comprehending the specific statements of the other clause. Almost all interpreters assume the former ground and understand the verse as naming or distinguishing the four points of the compass. But the other supposition is ingeniously maintained by the Missionary in China, who makes the first clause a general prediction that converts shall come from the remotest nations, and the other an explanation of this vague expression, as including the north, the west, and the land of Sinim. Upon this construction of the sentence, which is certainly plausible and striking, it may be observed, in the first place, that it is not necessary for the end at which the author seems to aim in urging it. This end appears to be the securing of some proof that the specifications of the second clause relate to *distant* countries. But this conclusion is almost as obvious, if not entirely so, upon the other supposition; for if one of the four quarters is denoted by the phrase *from afar*, the idea necessarily suggested is that all the other points enumerated are remote likewise. The same thing would moreover be sufficiently apparent from the whole drift of the context as relating not to proximate or local changes but to vast and universal ones. Nothing is gained, therefore, even for the author's own opinion, by the

admission of this new construction. Another observation is that the authority on which he seems to rest its claims is inconclusive, namely, that of the Hebrew accents. He states the testimony thus afforded much too strongly, when he speaks of "a full stop" after the clause *from afar they shall come*, and points the verse accordingly. The accent which occurs here, as a general rule, indicates the pause not at the end but in the middle of a sentence or complete proposition. It is therefore *prima facie* proof that the sentence is incomplete; and although there may be numerous exceptions, it cannot possibly demonstrate that the first clause does not form a part of the same series of particulars which is concluded in the second. That the first clause frequently contains what may be logically called an essential portion of the second, any reader may convince himself by the most cursory inspection of the book before us; and for two decisive examples in this very chapter, he has only to examine the fifth and seventh verses, where the substitution of a "full stop" would destroy the sense. But even if the testimony of the accents were still more explicit and decisive than it is, their comparatively recent date and their mixed relation to rhythmical or musical as well as to grammatical and logical distinctions make it always proper to subject their decision to the requisitions of the text and context in themselves considered. Notwithstanding the great value of the masoretic accents as an aid to interpretation, the appeal must after all be to the obvious meaning of the words, or in default of this to analogy and usage. The accents leave us therefore perfectly at liberty to look upon the mutual relation of the clauses as an open question, by inquiring whether there is any valid reason for departing from the ancient and customary supposition that the four points of the compass, or at least four quarters or directions, are distinctly mentioned. This leads me, in the third place, to observe that the objection which the Missionary makes to this hypothesis, apart from the question of accentuation, is

an insufficient one. He objects to the explanation of the phrase *from afar* as meaning *from the east* (and the same objection would by parity of reasoning apply to the explanation of it as denoting *from the south*), that *afar* does not mean the east, and is not elsewhere used to denote it. But it is not said that *afar* means the *east*, but simply that it here supplies its place. If any one, in numbering the points of the compass, should, instead of a complete enumeration, say the north, south, east, and so on, his obvious meaning could not well be rendered doubtful by denying that *and so on* ever means the west. It is not the words themselves, but the place which they occupy, and their relation to the rest of the sentence, that suggests rather than expresses the idea. So here, the north, the west, the land of Sinim, and *afar*, may denote the four points of the compass, although not so explicitly as in the case supposed because in that before us we have not merely one doubtful point, but two, if not three; and also because the one most dubious (*from afar*) is not at the end like *and so on*, but at the beginning. Still it seems most natural, when four distinct local designations are given, one of which is certainly, another almost certainly, and a third most probably, indicative of particular quarters or directions, to conclude that the fourth is so used likewise, however vague it may be in itself, and however situated in the sentence. The presumption thus created is confirmed by the fact that the hypothesis of only three divisions admits that the whole earth was meant to be included; and it thus becomes a question, which is most agreeable to general usage, and to that of Scripture in particular, a threefold or a fourfold distribution of the earth in such connections? If the latter, then analogy is strongly in favor of the common supposition that the first clause is not co-extensive with the other, but contains the first of four particulars enumerated. Over and above this argument derived from the usual distinction of four points or quarters, there is another furnished by the usage

of the pronoun *these*, when repeated so as to express a distributive idea. In all such cases, *these* and *these* means *some* and *others*; nor is there probably a single instance in which the first *these* comprehends the whole, while the others divide it into parts. This would be just as foreign from the Hebrew idiom as it is from ours to say, 'Some live in Europe, some in France, some in Holland,' when we mean that some live in Holland, some in France, and all in Europe. From all this it seems to follow that the verse most probably contains the customary distribution of the earth or heavens into four great quarters, and that one of these is designated by the phrase *from afar*. Which one is so described can only be determined by determining the true sense of the other three. The Missionary in China is therefore perfectly correct in setting aside all arguments against his own opinion founded on the supposition that *from afar* must mean the south or the east. The expression is so vague that it must be determined by the others, and cannot therefore be employed to determine them, without reasoning in a vicious circle. This serves to show that the question after all is of no great exegetical importance, since in either case the same conclusion may be reached. It is always best, however, to adhere to the more obvious and usual construction of a passage, in the absence of decisive reasons for departing from it. Assuming then that four points are mentioned, and that the first (*from afar*) can only be determined by determining the others, let us now attempt to do so. One of these (*the north*) is undisputed; for although interpreters may differ as to its precise bounds and extent, its relative position is unquestionably fixed by the usage of the Hebrew word. Another term is יָם, which strictly means *the sea*, but is often used for *west*, because on that side Palestine is naturally bounded by the Mediterranean. The geographical import of the term is to be decided by the predominant usage, which determines it to mean the west, and so it is explained both by the oldest and the latest

writers. Having two points thus determined, we are sure that the two which remain must be the east and south; and as we have already seen that *from afar* from its vagueness must receive but cannot give light, we have now to ascertain, if possible, in which of these directions lay the *land of Sinim*. The discrepancy of the versions as to these concluding words is remarkable, and shows the doubt in which the subject was involved at a very early period. Dismissing these gratuitous conjectures, we may now confine ourselves to those interpretations which have some foundation or appearance of it either in philology or history. Among these may be mentioned, first, the supposition that the *land of Sinim* is the country of the *Siniles* spoken of in Gen. 10 : 17 and 1 Chron. 1 : 15. But why should a Canaanitish tribe of no importance, and which nowhere reappears in history, be here made to represent one of the four quarters of the globe? This question becomes still more difficult to answer when it is added that the *Siniles* must have been immediately adjacent to the land of Israel, and on the north side which is separately mentioned. Others understand the Land of Sinim to be the wilderness of Sin or the peninsula of Sinai, and some even identify these with the country of the Canaanitish Sinites. To this opinion the decisive objection is not the one which the Missionary in China draws from the difference of name and from the plural form *Sinim*. That there were not two deserts of Sin, proves no more in this case than the assertion that there were not two Hermons proves against the application of the plural *Hermonim* to that mountain in Ps. 42 : 7. If a mountain might be so called, why not a desert? Or if *Hermonim* means *Hermonites*, why may not *Sinim* mean *Sinites*? This question is especially appropriate, because the author gives no explanation of the plural form, upon his own hypothesis. But although this objection is invalid, the other which the author urges is conclusive, namely, that Sinai and the wilderness of Sin were too near and too limited to be em

ployed in this connection. Another explanation founded on analogy of names is that the *land of Sinim* is the land of Egypt, so called from *Syene*, or from *Sin*, i. e. Pelusium, mentioned under that name by Ezekiel (30 : 15, 16). Here again it seems unfair to argue, with the Missionary in China, from the plural form of the Hebrew name; for if, as he observes, it is merely fanciful to refer it to the old geographical distinction of Upper and Lower Egypt, is it not more than fanciful to refer it to China where there is no such distinction to account for it at all? If it be said, that *Sinim* means the Chinese, it may just as easily be said that it means the Egyptians. There is no force therefore in the argument from this peculiarity in form, any more than in the argument which the Missionary in China himself admits to be here inapplicable, that Egypt was not sufficiently important to be made the representative of one great quarter. As little weight attaches to his argument that this interpretation of the name would make the distribution too unequal; for as he adjusts the limits of the north and even of the land of Sinim at discretion, there is no sufficient reason why the same thing might not be done with Sinim if it did mean Egypt. The really decisive ground, assumed by the same writer, is that Egypt, notwithstanding its extent and historical importance, was too near at hand to suit the context, which requires a remote land to be here meant, whether *from afar* be taken as a general description or as a distinct specification. Another strong objection is that no cause can be shown. from analogy or otherwise, for the designation of this well-known country, in this one place only, by a name derived from one of its cities. and that not of the first rank. The only remaining explanation. which will be referred to. is that the land of Sinim is China. An objection to this interpretation has been drawn from its resemblance to an etymological conceit founded merely on an assonance of names. But in modern times it has been generally adopted not only by the most



distinguished writers on Isaiah, but by the most eminent comparative philologists, who have investigated the question as one of historical and literary interest. The only plausible objections which are still urged against it may be reduced to two. The first is that China was unknown to the Jews at the date of the prophecy. To this it may be answered, first, that no one who believes in the inspiration of the prophets, can refuse to admit the possibility of such a prediction, even if the fact were so; and secondly, that in all probability China was known to the Jews at a very early period. The rashness of asserting a negative in such cases has been clearly proved by the modern discovery of porcelain vessels with Chinese inscriptions in the monuments of Thebes. But it is still objected, that the name *Sinim* is not that used by the Chinese themselves, nor by other nations until long after the date of this prophecy, it having been derived from a family which did not ascend the throne until about 246 years before the birth of Christ. It is remarkable how readily this date in Chinese history is taken for granted as undoubtedly correct by those who wish to use it for an argument, although it rests upon a dark and dubious tradition of a distant unknown country; although the very text before us makes it doubtful; although the universal prevalence of the name Sin, Chin, or Jin, throughout western and southern Asia from time immemorial presupposes an antiquity still more remote; and although Chinese historians themselves record that the family from which the name derives its origin, for ages before it ruled the empire ruled a province or kingdom on the western frontier, whence the name might easily have been extended to the western nations. There are in fact few cases of a name being more extensively or longer prevalent than that of *China*, the very form which it exhibits in the Sanscrit, the mother language of southern Asia. That the Chinese themselves have never used it, although acquainted with it, is nothing to the purpose. A

Hebrew writer would of course use the name familiar in the west of Asia. This universal name is allowed to be essentially identical with Sin by the highest philological authorities. There is therefore no conclusive force in either of the arguments advanced against this explanation of the name. As positive reasons on the other side, besides the main one drawn from the coincidence of name, may be mentioned the agreement of so many different and independent writers, and the appropriateness of the explanation to the context. Under the first head may be classed precisely those philologists whose peculiar studies best entitle them to speak with authority on such a point, and those German commentators on Isaiah, who are most accustomed to differ among themselves and with the older writers, especially where anything is likely to be added by a proposed interpretation to the strength of revelation or rather to the clearness of its evidences. Prejudice and interest would certainly have led this class of writers to oppose rather than favour a hypothesis which tends to identify the subject of this prophecy with China, the great object of missionary effort at the present day. The other confirmation is afforded by the suitableness of the sense thus evolved to the connection. If the land of Sinim meant the wilderness of Sin or even Egypt, it would be difficult if not impossible to give a satisfactory solution of its singular position here as one of the great quarters or divisions of the world. But if it mean China, that extreme limit of the eastern world, that hive of nations, supposed to comprehend a third part of the human race, the enigma explains itself. Even to us there would be nothing unintelligible or absurd, however strange or novel, in the combination, north, west, south, and China. On the whole, then, a hypothesis which solves all difficulties, satisfies the claims of philology and history, unites the suffrages of the most independent schools and parties, fully meets the requisitions of the text and context, and opens a glorious field of expectation and of effort to the

church, may be safely regarded as the true one. For an interesting view of the extent to which the promise has already been fulfilled, and of the encouragements to hope and pray for its entire consummation, the reader is referred to the little book, of which we have so frequently made mention, although our citations have been necessarily confined to the first or expository chapter, the remaining four being occupied with the fulfilment of the prophecy.

13. *Shout, oh heavens, and rejoice, oh earth ; let the mountains burst into a shout ; because Jehovah has comforted his people, and on his sufferers he will have mercy.* This is a very common method with Isaiah of foretelling any joyful change by summoning all nature to exult in it as already realized. See especially ch. 44 : 23. Jehovah's consolation of his people is administered by deed as well as by word. (Compare ch. 51 : 3, 12. 52 : 9. 66 : 13. Luke 2 : 25, 38) The consolation here meant is the joyful assemblage of his people from all parts of the earth, predicted in the foregoing verse. The Hebrew word which is commonly translated in the English Bible *poor*, is here rendered more correctly *afflicted*. The expression *his afflicted* intimates at once their previous condition and their intimate relation to the Lord as their protector.

14. *And (yet) Zion said, Jehovah hath forsaken me, and the Lord hath forgotten me.* So far was this glorious change from having been procured by confidence in God, that Zion thought herself forsaken and forgotten. Those who restrict these prophecies to the Babylonish exile are compelled to understand this either of the captive inhabitants of Zion, as distinguished from the other exiles, or of Jerusalem itself, complaining of its desolation. But the former distinction is as arbitrary here as in ch. 40 : 9. and the long argumentative expostulation which ensues would be absurd if addressed to the bare walls

of an empty town. The only satisfactory conclusion is, that Zion or Jerusalem is mentioned as the capital of Israel, the centre of the true religion, the earthly residence of God himself, and therefore an appropriate and natural emblem of his chosen people or the ancient church, just as we speak of the corruptions or spiritual tyranny of Rome, meaning not the city but the great ecclesiastical society or corporation which it represents and of which it is the centre.

15. *Will a woman forget her suckling, from having mercy* (i. e. so as not to have mercy) *on the son of her womb? Also* (or even) *these will forget, and I will not forget thee.* The constancy of God's affection for his people is expressed by the strongest possible comparison derived from human instincts. There is a climax in the thought, if not in the expression. What is indirectly mentioned as impossible in one clause, is declared to be real in the other. He first declares that he can no more forget them than a woman can forget her child; he then rises higher and declares that he is still more mindful of them than a mother. The future verb at the beginning implies without expressing a potential sense. If she will, she can; if she cannot, then of course she will not. For the negative use of the preposition *from*, see above, on ch. 44 : 18. There is no need of departing from the obvious meaning of the prophet's language, which is not hypothetical but categorical. He does not say that if or though a woman could forget her child he would not follow her example, but asserts directly that she can and will, and puts this fact in contrast with his own unwavering constancy. The plural in the last clause, like the singular in the first, denotes the whole class. He does not say that all mothers thus forget their children, nor that mothers generally do so, but that such oblivion is not unknown to the experience of mothers as a class, or of woman as an ideal individual. The primitive simplicity with which

the Hebrew idiom employs the simple copulative *and*, where we feel the strongest adversative expression to be necessary, really adds to the force of the language, when it is once understood and familiar. The *and* may be retained, and yet the antithesis expressed in English by supplying *yet* : and (yet) I will not forgive thee.

16. *Behold, on (my) palms I have graven thee ; thy walls (are) before me continually.* The true sense of the Prophet's figure seems to be the one expressed by those who suppose him to allude, not to a picture or a plan of Zion, but to her name imprinted on his hands for a memorial, as the ancient slave and soldier wore his master's name but for a different purpose. (See above, on ch. 44 : 5 ) The use of the word *palms* implies a double inscription and in an unusual position, chosen with a view to its being constantly in sight. *Thy walls*, i. e. the image of thy walls upon my hands. But this is not necessarily or certainly the true relation of the clauses, which may be considered not as parts of the same image but as two distinct images of one and the same thing. The essential idea, I will not forget thee, is first expressed by saying, I will write thy name upon my hands, and then by saying, I will keep thy walls constantly before me, i. e. in my sight and memory. (See Ps. 16 : 8. Is. 38 : 13. The mention of the *walls* is no proof that Zion is mentioned merely as a city, since the image of a city is the proximate object here presented, even if the object which it symbolizes be the church or chosen people.

17. *Thy sons hasten (to thee) ; thy destroyers and thy wasters shall go out from thee.* This is the proof that God had not forsaken her. The true construction, as in many other cases, seems to be that which represents the process as begun but not complete. Already had her sons begun to hasten to her, and ere long her enemies should be entirely departed. The

natural interpretation of the last clause is that which understands it as containing simply an emphatic contrast between friends and foes, the latter taking their departure, and the former coming into possession.

18. *Lift up thine eyes round about and see, all of them are gathered together, they are come to thee. (As) I live, saith Jehovah, (I swear) that all of them as an ornament thou shalt put on, and bind (or gird) them like the bride.* The sons, described in v. 17 as rapidly approaching, are now in sight, and their mother is invited to survey them, by lifting up her eyes *round about*, i. e. in all directions, with allusion to their coming from the four points of the compass, as predicted in v. 12. The common version *all these*, seems to introduce a new subject. The strict translation, *all of them*, refers to what precedes, and means all the sons who are described in the first clause of v. 17 as hastening to her. They are now already gathered, i. e. met together at the point to which they tended from so many distinct quarters. *They come to thee* is an inadequate translation. The true sense is that they are actually come, i. e. arrived. The formula of swearing here used strictly means, *I (am) alive (or living)*, and is itself equivalent to *I swear* in English. The sons are then compared to ornaments of dress, which the mother girds or binds upon her person. As a bride puts on her ornaments, so thou shalt be adorned with thy children.

19. *For thy ruins, and thy wastes, and thy land of desolation (i. e. thy desolated land)—for now thou shalt be too narrow for the inhabitant, and far off shall be thy devourers (those who swallow thee up).* The general meaning of this verse is evident, although the construction is obscure. Perhaps the best solution is the one which supposes the construction to be interrupted and resumed: *For thy wastes, and thy ruins, and thy*



land of desolation—(then beginning anew, without completing the first sentence)—for thou shalt be too narrow etc. This mode of composition, not unlike what appears in the first draft of any piece of writing till obliterated by correction, is comparatively frequent in the ancient writers, not excepting some of the highest classical models, though proscribed as inelegant and incorrect by the fastidious rules of modern rhetoric. *For the inhabitant* is literally *from the inhabitant*, the Hebrew preposition being here used as in 1 Kings 19:7. For the application of the verb *swallow up* to enemies, see Lam. 2:2, 5. The *devourers* of this verse are of course the *destroyers* of v. 17.

20. *Again (or still) shall they say in thine ears, the sons of thy childlessness, (Too) narrow for me is the place; come near for me, and I will dwell (or that I may dwell).* The *again* may simply indicate that something more is to be said than had been said before, in which case it is nearly equivalent to *over and above this* or *moreover*. Or it may have its true sense as a particle of time, and intimate that these words shall be uttered more than once, again and again, or still, i. e. continually, as the necessity becomes more urgent. The relative position of the verb and its subject is retained in the translation, as it causes no obscurity, and exhibits more exactly the characteristic form of the original. By *the sons of thy childlessness* we may understand *the sons of thee a childless one*, or, *thy sons oh childless one*. The apparent contradiction is intentional, as appears from what follows. She who was deemed by others, and who deemed herself, a childless mother, hears the voices of her children, complaining that they have not a sufficient space to dwell in. *In thy ears* means *in thy hearing*, although not addressed to thee. (Compare 2 Sam. 18:12.) Even in ch. 5:9, the idea seems to be not merely that of hearing, but of overhearing. The idea of excess (*too narrow*) is not expressed but implied, the strict translation being simply this. *the place is narrow for*

*me.* All interpreters agree that the first verb in the last clause means *make room for me*, but they differ in explaining how this sense may be extracted from the Hebrew words. Some explain the phrase to mean, *Come near to me*, that there may be more room, but the sense thus given to the words is inappropriate, because the person speaking demands room not for others but for himself, which he could not possibly secure by calling on his neighbour to come close to him. The whole difficulty seems to have arisen from assuming that the preposition means *to*, and denotes the direction of the motion, in opposition to the fact that it is never so used after this verb, but always indicates the purpose or design. This usage fully justifies the explanation of the phrase before us as meaning, 'approach to one side for me or on my account' leaving the precise direction of the motion undetermined. The sense *for me* is the more probable, because it is precisely that which it has in the first clause of this verse and the first clause of the next.

21. *And thou shalt say in thine heart*, i. e. to thyself, in strict agreement with the preceding verse, as a dialogue not between the mother and her children, but between the children in their mother's hearing. This is consequently not an answer to what goes before, but an observation uttered, as it were, *aside* by an eye and ear witness of the struggle and the clamour for more room. With them the question is, where they shall dwell; with her it is, whence they came. *Who hath produced these for me?* As in other cases the mother is said to bear a child *to* the father, so in this case one mother may without absurdity be said to bear a child *to* another, because in either case the essential idea is that of one person being provided with a child by another, whether it be a husband by his wife, or a childless woman by a woman who has children. The truth is, however, that the force and beauty of the passage are ex-

ceedingly impaired by cutting its bold figures to the quick, and insisting on a rigorous conformity to artificial rules, instead of resting in the general conception, so clearly and affectingly presented, of a childless mother finding herself suddenly surrounded by the clamour of a multitude of children, and asking in amazement whence they came and who they are. The distinction between father and mother is one which would never occur to the speaker in such a case, and may therefore be safely overlooked by the interpreter. The cause of her astonishment is then assigned. *And I was bereaved and barren.* These almost incompatible expressions for a *childless* one are joined for the purpose of expressing that idea in the strongest manner, and with more regard to the idea itself than to the rules of rhetorical propriety. *An exile and a banished one.* The last word strictly means *removed*, i. e. from home and from society. *And these who brought up?* literally made great, as in ch. 1:2. *Behold, I was left alone (or by myself); these, where were they?* The pronoun at the end is emphatic: where were they? She asks how it is that she was so long desolate and childless, when she sees so many children round her now. The Zion of this context is the ancient church or chosen people, represented by the Sanctuary and the Holy City, as its local centre and appointed symbol. Of this ideal subject, desolation, childlessness, captivity, exile, and the other varying conditions here described, may all be predicated with the same propriety. If this, however, be the true exegetical hypothesis, and no other seems to answer all the requisitions of the case, then the Babylonish exile, and the state of the church at that period of her history, has no claim to be recognized as anything more than a particular exemplification of the general promise, that the church, after passing through extreme depression and attenuation, should be raised up and replenished like a childless mother who suddenly finds herself surrounded by a large and joyous family of children.

22 *Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold, I will lift up to the nations my hand, and I will set up to the peoples my standard (or signal); and they will bring thy sons in the bosom (or arms), and thy daughters on the shoulders shall be carried.* The idea expressed by the figures of the first clause is that of summoning the nations to perform their part in this great work. The figures themselves are the same as in ch. 13:2, viz. the shaking or waving of the hand and the erection of a banner, pole, or other signal, with distinct reference perhaps to persons at a distance and at hand. The figurative promise would be verified by any divine influence securing the co-operation of the heathen in accomplishing Jehovah's purpose, whatever might be the external circumstances either of the call or their compliance with it. The effect of that compliance is described in the last clause, as the bringing home of Zion's sons and daughters, with all the tender care which is wont to be lavished upon infants by their parents or their nurses. The same image is again presented in ch. 60:4. 66:12. Peculiar to this case is the use of the word *חֶמֶץ*, which seems most probably to signify either the bosom or the arm, when spoken of in reference to carrying and especially the carrying of children. Strictly perhaps the word expresses an idea intermediate between arm and bosom, or including both, viz. the space enclosed by them in the act of grasping or embracing. Those who restrict the promise to the exiled Jews in Babylon are under the necessity of making this a restoration, which is not only perfectly gratuitous but inconsistent with the verse preceding, where these same children are described as appearing for the first time and thereby exciting the surprise of the forsaken mother.

23. *And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers; face to the ground shall they bow to thee, and the dust of thy feet shall they lick; and thou shalt know that I*

*am Jehovah, whose waiters (or hoppers, i. e. those who trust in him) shall not be ashamed (or disappointed).* The same promise is repeated in substance with a change of form. Instead of the nations, we have now their kings and queens; and instead of Zion's sons and daughters, Zion herself. This last variation, while it either perplexes or annoys the rhetorical precisian, aids the rational interpreter by showing that the figures of the preceding verse, however natural and just, are not to be rigidly explained. In other words, it shows that between the Zion of this passage and her children there is no essential difference, and that what is promised to the one is promised to the other. This identity is clear from the apparent solecism of representing the bereaved and childless mother as herself an infant in the arms and at the breast, because really as much in need of sustenance and care as those before called her sons and daughters, or rather because she is but another figure for the same thing. This confusion of imagery all tends to confirm the supposition that the Zion of these prophecies is not a city, which could scarcely be thus confounded with its citizens, but a society or corporation, between which as an ideal person and its individual members or any given portion of them, there is no such well-defined and palpable distinction. The Hebrew word to which the English Version and some others give the sense of *nourishers*, is now explained to mean a *carrier* or *bearer*, which last name is applied by the English in India to the male nurses of their children. Some regard it as equivalent to *παιδαγωγός* (Gal. 3 : 24), and as referring to a later period of childhood than the other, which is properly a suckler or wet-nurse. But as there is nothing in the text to suggest the idea of succession in time, they may be regarded as poetical equivalents. The image is still that of a tender infant, with an almost imperceptible substitution of the mother for her children. *Face-to-the-ground* is a kind of compound adverb like our English phrases *sword-in-hand*, *arm-in-arm*, but still

more concise in the original. The addition of these words determines the meaning of the preceding verb as denoting actual prostration, which is also clear from the next clause, where the licking of the dust cannot be naturally understood as a strong expression for the kissing of the feet or of the earth in token of homage, but is rather like the biting of the dust in Homer, a poetical description of complete and compulsory prostration, not merely that of subjects to their sovereign, but of vanquished enemies before their conquerors. (Compare Mic 7 : 17. Ps. 72 : 9.)

24. *Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, and shall the captivity of the righteous be delivered?* This verse suggests a difficulty in the way of the fulfilment of the promise. The words here translated *prey* and *captivity* are combined likewise elsewhere to describe whatever can be taken in war, including prisoners and booty. (Num. 31 : 11, 12, 27, 32.) The latter, though properly an abstract, is continually used as a collective term for *captives*. Its combination here with *righteousness* has perplexed interpreters. The English Version gives it the sense of *lawful captive*, i. e. one who has been lawfully enslaved, or one who deserves to be a captive. The simplest and most obvious construction of the words is that which makes them mean the captives of a righteous conqueror. The argument may then be stated thus : Shall the captives even of a righteous conqueror be freed in such a case? How much more the captives of an unjust oppressor!

25. *For thus saith Jehovah, also (or even) the captivity (or captives) of the mighty shall be taken, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered, and with thy strivers will I strive, and thy sons will I save.* Shall the captives of the righteous be delivered? Yes, and more; for thus saith Jehovah, not only this but also the captives of the tyrant or oppressor. The logical connection



between this verse and the one before it has been already stated. Its general sense is clear, as a solemn declaration that the power of the captor can oppose no real obstacle to the fulfilment of the promise of deliverance. The same idea is expressed in the last clause in more general and literal terms.

26. *And I will make thy oppressors eat their (own) flesh, and as with new wine, with their blood shall they be drunken ; and all flesh shall know, that I, Jehovah, am thy Saviour, and (that) thy Redeemer is the Mighty One of Jacob.* The first clause is commonly explained as a strong metaphorical description of intestine wars and mutual destruction, similar to that in Zech. 11 : 9. In this case, however, as in ch. 9 : 19, the image is perhaps rather that of a person devouring his own flesh in impotent and desperate rage. The last clause winds up this part of the prophecy by the usual return to the great theme of the whole book, the relation of Jehovah to his people, as their Saviour, Redeemer, and Protector, self-existent, eternal, and almighty in himself, yet condescending to be called the Mighty One of Jacob. The last words may be construed as a single proposition, 'that I am Jehovah thy Saviour and thy Redeemer the Mighty One of Jacob.' This will be found upon comparison, however, to express much less than the construction above given, which asserts not only that the speaker is Jehovah etc. but that the Being who possesses these attributes is the peculiar covenanted God of Israel or Jacob. For the different epithets of this clause, see above, ch. 1 : 24. 41 : 14. 43 : 3. For a similar statement of the purpose of God's providential dealings with his people, see ch. 45 . 3, and v. 23 of this same chapter.

## CHAPTER I.

THIS chapter contains no entirely new element, but a fresh view of several which have already been repeatedly exhibited. The first of these is the great truth, that the sufferings of God's people are the necessary fruit of their own sins, vs. 1. The second is the power of Jehovah to accomplish their deliverance, vs. 2, 3. The third is the Servant of Jehovah, his mission, his qualifications for it, his endurance of reproach and opposition on account of it, vs. 4-9. The fourth is the way of salvation and the certain doom of those who neglect it, vs. 10, 11.

This perpetual recurrence of the same great themes in various combinations makes the mere division of the chapters a comparatively unimportant matter, although some writers seem to attach great importance to the separation of the first three verses from what follows, and their intimate connection with what goes before. It should be ever borne in mind that these divisions are conventional and modern, and that in this part of Isaiah more especially they might have been omitted altogether without any serious inconvenience to the reader or interpreter. A much greater evil than the want of these divisions is the habit of ascribing to them undue authority and suffering the exposition to be governed by them, as if each were a separate prediction or discourse, instead of being arbitrary though convenient breaks in a continued composition, not materially differing from the paragraphs now used in every modern book. The re-arrangement of the chapters in the present case would answer no good purpose, since the first three verses are not more closely connected with the end of the preceding chapter than what follows is with its beginning. The true course is to make use of the common divisions as convenient pauses, but to read and expound the text as one continuous discourse.

1. *Thus saith Jehovah.* This prefatory formula has no doubt had some influence on the division of the chapters. It does not, however, always indicate the introduction of a new subject, as may be seen by a comparison of ch. 48 : 17 with ch. 49 : 1. *Where is or what is ?* *The bill of divorcement*, literally, writing of excision or repudiation, translated in the Septuagint βιβλίον τοῦ ἀποστατοῦ, which form is retained in the New Testament (Matt 19 : 7. Mark 10 : 4) though sometimes abridged (Matt. 5 : 31). The Hebrew phrase denotes the legal instrument by which the Mosaic law allowed a husband to repudiate his wife (Deut. 24 : 1-3). *Of your mother.* The persons addressed are the individual members of the church or nation; their mother is the church or nation itself. These are of course distinguished from each other only by a poetical figure. *Whom I have sent (or put) away.* These words admit of a twofold construction. According to the common Hebrew idiom, the relative pronoun, when the object of a verb, is followed by the personal pronoun which it represents. According to this idiom, *whom I have sent her*, means nothing more than *whom I have sent*, except that it more distinctly indicates the gender of the object. This construction is recommended here, not only by its strict conformity to general usage, but by its recurrence in the very next clause, where the Hebrew words are agreed on all hands to mean *to whom I sold you*. But as the verb *to send* governs two accusatives in Hebrew, the relative may take the place of one of them, denoting the end for which or the means by which, as it actually does in ch. 55 : 11. 2 Sam 11 : 22. 1 Kings 14 : 6, and in the case before us, according to the judgment of most modern writers, who explain the words to mean *wherewith I have sent her away*. The use of the disjunctive *or* in Hebrew is comparatively rare, and consequently more significant when it does occur, as in this case, where it seems designed to intimate that the two figures of the clause are to be taken separately, not together, that is to say,

that the punishment of the people is not compared to the repudiation of a wife and the sale of her children in the same ideal case, but represented by the two distinct emblems of a wife divorced and children sold. *Or which of my creditors* (is it) *to whom I have sold you?* We have here an allusion to another provision of the Mosaic law, which allows debtors to be sold in payment of their debts (Matt. 18 : 25), and even children by their parents (Exod. 21 : 7). The answer follows in the other clause. *Behold, for your iniquities ye have been sold.* The reflexive meaning, *ye have sold yourselves*, is frequently expressed by this form of the verb, but not invariably nor even commonly; it is not, therefore, necessary here, nor even favoured by the parallelism, as the corresponding term is a simple passive of a different form, and one which cannot, from the nature of the case, denote a reflexive or reciprocal action. *And for your transgressions, your mother has been sent* (or *put*) *away.* The repetition of *your*, where *her transgressions* might have been expected, only serves to show more clearly the real identity of those who are formally distinguished as the mother and the children. The interrogation in the first clause of this verse has been variously understood. The simplest and most obvious interpretation of the first clause is the one suggested by the second, which evidently stands related to it as an answer to the question which occasions it. In the present case, the answer is wholly unambiguous, viz. that they were sold for their sins, and that she was put away for their transgressions. The question naturally corresponding to this answer is the question, why the mother was divorced, and why the sons were sold. Supposing this to be the substance of the first clause, its form is very easily accounted for. *Where is your mother's bill of divorcement?* produce it that we may see the cause of her repudiation. *Where is the creditor to whom I sold you?* let him appear and tell us what was the occasion of your being sold. The general idea of rejection is twice clothed in a figurative

dress, first by emblems borrowed from the law and custom of divorce, and then by emblems borrowed from the law and custom of imprisonment for debt. The restriction of this passage to the Babylonish exile is entirely arbitrary. If it admits of any special application, it is rather to the repudiation of the Jewish people at the Advent.

2. *Why did I come, and there was no man? (why) did I call, and there was no one answering?* The idiom of occidental languages would here admit, if not require, a more involved and hypothetical construction. ‘Why, when I came, was there no one (to receive me), and, when I called, no one to answer me? (See above, ch. 5 : 4.) In themselves, the words imply nothing more than that God had come near to the people, by his word and providence, but without any suitable response on their part. The clause is explanatory of their being *sold and put away*, as represented in the foregoing verse. The general truth which it teaches is, that God has never and will never put away his people even for a time without preceding disobedience and alienation upon their part. Particular examples of this general truth are furnished by the Babylonish exile and by every season of distress and persecution. The other clause precludes the vindication of their unbelief and disobedience on the ground that they had not sufficient reason to obey his commands and rely upon his promises. Such doubts are rendered impious and foolish by the proofs of his almighty power. This power is first asserted indirectly by a question implying the strongest negation: *Is my hand shortened, shortened, from redemption? and is there with me no power* (i. e. have I no power) *to deliver?* Shortness of hand or arm is a common oriental figure for defect of power, especially in reference to some particular effect, which is thus represented as beyond the reach. (See ch. 59 : 1. Num. 11 : 23. ch. 37 : 17.) According to Gesenius, Artaxerxes Longimanus was so called, not in

reference to any corporeal peculiarity, but as being possessed of extraordinary power. The emphatic repetition of the Hebrew verb may, as usual, be variously expressed in translation by the introduction of intensive phrases, such as *altogether* or *at all*, or by a simple repetition of the verb in English. *From redemption*, i. e. so as not to redeem or deliver from distress. (See above, on ch. 49 : 15.) *Behold, by my rebuke* (a term often used to express God's control over the elements) *I will dry up the sea*. I can make a complete change in the face of nature. Most of the modern writers use the present form, *I dry up the sea*. But this, as expressing an habitual fact, fails to give the sense of the original, which is not a description of what he usually does, but a declaration of what he can do and what he will do in the present instance if it should be necessary. Hence the best translation of the verb is the exact one which adheres to the strict sense of the future. As in many other cases, this general expression may involve a particular allusion, namely, to the crossing of the Red Sea at the exodus from Egypt. But to make this the direct and main sense of the words, is equally at variance with good taste and the context. The remaining words of this verse are intended merely to complete the picture, by subjoining to the cause its natural effect. *Let their fish stink for want of water and die of thirst*. It seems that the writer here passes from the tone of prediction or general description to that of actual command. It may however be a poetical variation of the ordinary future form, in which case the sense will be, *their fish shall die* etc.; or it may indicate an indirect or oblique construction, *so that their fish shall stink* etc., which last explanation is the one preferred by the latest writers. The pronoun *their* refers to *sea and rivers*, or to the last alone.

3. The description of Jehovah's power, as displayed in his control of the elements, is still continued. *I will clothe the heavens in blackness*. The Hebrew noun, according to its



etymology, denotes not merely a black colour, but such a colour used as a sign of mourning. Thus understood, it corresponds exactly to the following words, where the customary mourning dress of ancient times is mentioned. *And sackcloth I will place (or make) their covering.* The reference of this verse to the plague of darkness in the land of Egypt is admissible only in the sense explained above with respect to the passage of the Red Sea, namely, as a particular allusion comprehended in a general description. Some writers understand it as referring to the usual phenomena of storms, or even to the obscuration of the sky by clouds; but it is inconceivable that such an every-day occurrence should be coupled with the drying up of seas and rivers, as a proof of God's power over nature and the elements. The sense required by the connection is that of an extraordinary darkness (such as that of an eclipse), or even an extinction of the heavenly bodies, as in ch. 13 : 10.

4. *The Lord Jehovah hath given to me.* As Jehovah is the speaker in the foregoing verse, many regard this clause as a proof that these are the words of the Messiah, who, in virtue of his twofold nature, might speak in the person of Jehovah, and yet say, *Jehovah hath given to me.* The true hypothesis is still the same which we have found ourselves constrained to assume in all like cases throughout the foregoing chapters, namely, that the *servant of Jehovah*, as he calls himself in v. 10 below, is the Messiah and his People as a complex person, or the Church in indissoluble union with its Head, asserting his divine commission and authority to act as the great teacher and enlightener of the world. For this end God had given him a ready tongue or speech. Most interpreters adopt a different version of לְמַנְיָרִים in the first and last clause, giving it at first the sense of *learned*, and afterwards that of *learners*. These two ideas, it is true, are near akin, and may be blended in the Hebrew word as they are in the English *scholar*, which

is used both for a learner and a learned person. It is best, however, for that very reason, to retain the same word in translation. As applied to Christ, this passage is descriptive of that power of conviction and persuasion which is frequently ascribed in the New Testament to his oral teaching. As his representative and instrument, the Church has always had a measure of the same gift enabling her to execute her high vocation. *To know* (that I might know) *to help or succour the weary* (with) *a word*. *He will waken, in the morning, in the morning, he will waken for me the ear*, i. e. he will waken my ear, rouse my attention, and open my mind to the reception of the truth. (See ch. 43 : 8. 1 Sam. 9 : 15 20 : 2. Ps. 41 : 7.) The present tense (*he wakeneth*) asserts a claim to constant inspiration; the future expresses a confident belief that God will assist and inspire him. The accents require *in the morning in the morning* to be read together, as in ch. 28 : 19, where it is an intensive repetition meaning *every morning*. It might otherwise be thought more natural to read the sentence thus, *he will waken in the morning, in the morning he will waken*, a twofold expression of the same idea, viz. that he will do so early. In either case the object of both verbs is the same; the introduction of the pronoun *me* after the first in the English Version being needless and hurtful to the sentence. The last words of the verse declare the end or purpose of this wakening, *to hear* (i. e. that I may hear) *like the disciples or the taught*, i. e. that I may give attention as a learner listens to his teacher

5. *The Lord Jehovah opened for me the ear, and I resisted not.* The common version, *I was not rebellious*, seems to convert the description of an act into that of a habit. *I did not draw back*, or refuse the office, on account of the hardships by which I foresaw that it would be accompanied. There may be an allusion to the conduct of Moses (4 : 13) in declining the danger-

ous but honourable work to which the Lord had called him. (Compare Jer. 1 : 6. 17 : 16.)

6. *My back I gave to (those) smiting.* We may understand by *gave* either *yielded* unresistingly or *offered* voluntarily. (Compare Matt. 5 : 39.) The punishment of scourging was a common one, and is particularly mentioned in the history of our Lord's maltreatment. *And my cheeks to (those) plucking* (the beard or hair). The context here requires something more than the playful or even the contemptuous pulling of the beard, the *vellere barbam* of Horace and Persius, to which some writers have referred. A better parallel is Neh. 13 : 25, where the Tirshatha is said to have contended with the Jews, and cursed them, and smote them, and *plucked off their hair*. (Compare Ezra 9 : 3.) This particular species of abuse is not recorded in the history of our Saviour's sufferings, but some suppose it to be comprehended in the general term *buffeting*. *My face I did not hide from shame and spitting.* In the phrase *I did not hide my face* there may be an allusion to the common figure of confusion covering the face (Jer. 51 : 51), in reference no doubt to the natural expression of this feeling by a blush, or in extreme cases by a livid paleness overspreading the features. Some have imagined that by *spitting* nothing more is meant than spitting on the ground in one's presence, which, according to the oriental usages and feelings, is a strong expression of abhorrence and contempt. But if spitting in a person's presence was such an indignity, how much more spitting in his face; and the whole connection shows that the reference is not to any mitigated form of insult but to its extreme. That this part of the description was fulfilled in the experience of our Saviour, is expressly recorded, Matt. 26 : 67. 27 : 30. From the impossibility of proving any literal coincidence between the prophetic description and the personal experience of the Prophet himself, when taken in connection with

the palpable coincidences which have been already pointed out in the experience of Jesus Christ, many interpreters infer that it was meant to be a literal prediction of his sufferings. But it has been observed that if it were so, its fulfilment, or the record of it, would be imperfect, since the points of agreement are not fully commensurate with those of the description. (See for example what has been already said with respect to the plucking of the beard or hair.) The most satisfactory solution of the difficulty is the one which regards the prophecy as metaphorical, and as denoting cruel and contemptuous treatment in general, and supposes the literal coincidences, as in many other cases, to have been providentially secured, not merely to convict the Jews, but also to identify to others the great subject of the prophecy. But if the prophecy itself be metaphorical, it may apply to other subjects, less completely and remarkably but no less really; not to Isaiah, it is true, from whom its terms, even figuratively understood, are foreign, but to the church or people of God, the body of Christ, which like its head has ever been an object of contempt with those who did not understand its character or recognize its claims. What is literally true of the Head is metaphorically true of the Body. 'I gave my back to the smiters and my cheeks to the pluckers, my face I did not hide from shame and spitting.'

7. *And the Lord Jehovah will help me, or afford help to me. Therefore I am not confounded by the persecution and contempt described in the foregoing verses. The common version, I shall not be confounded, is not only arbitrary but injurious to the sense, which is not that God's protection will save him from future shame, but that the hope of it saves him even now. The words strictly mean I have not been confounded, which implies of course that he is not so now. Therefore I have set my face as a flint. This is a common description of firmness and determination, as expressed in the countenance. It is equally*

applicable to a wicked impudence (Jer. 5 : 3. Zech. 7 : 12) and a holy resolution (Ezek. 3 : 8, 9). The same thing is expressed by Jeremiah under different but kindred figures (Jer. 1 : 17, 18. 15 : 20.) It is probable that Luke alludes to these passages, when he says that our Lord *steadfastly set his face* (τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ἐστήριξε) *to go to Jerusalem* (Luke 9 : 51.) *And I know that I shall not be ashamed.*

8. *Near (is) my justifier* (or the one justifying me). This is strictly a forensic term meaning to acquit or pronounce innocent, in case of accusation, and to right or do justice to, in case of civil controversy. The use of this word and of several correlative expressions, may be clearly learned from Deut. 25 : 1. The justifier is of course Jehovah. His being *near* is not intended to denote the proximity of an event still future, but to describe his intervention as constantly within reach and available. It is not the justification which is said to be near to the time of speaking, but the justifier who is said to be near the speaker himself. The justification of his servant is the full vindication of his claims to divine authority and inspiration. At the same time there is a designed coincidence between the terms of the prediction and the issue of our Saviour's trial ; but the prophecy is not to be restricted to this object. The general meaning of the words is, all this reproach is undeserved, as will be seen hereafter. Since God himself has undertaken his defence, the accuser's case is hopeless. He therefore asks triumphantly, *Who will contend with me?* The Hebrew verb denotes specifically litigation or forensic strife. Rom. 8 : 33, 34, is an obvious imitation of this passage as to form. But even the warmest advocates for letting the New Testament explain the Old, are forced to acknowledge that in this case Paul merely borrows his expressions from the Prophet, and applies them to a different object. In any other case this class of writers would no doubt have insisted that the justi

fiar must be Christ and the justified his people; but from this they are precluded by their own assumption, that the Messiah is the speaker. Both hypotheses, so far as they have any just foundation, may be reconciled by the supposition that the ideal speaker is the Body and the Head in union. In the sense here intended, Christ is justified by the Father, and at the same time justifies his people. *We will stand* (or *let us stand*) *together*, at the bar, before the judgment-seat, a frequent application of the Hebrew verb. (See Num 27 : 2. Deut. 19 : 17 1 Kings 3 : 16.) This is an indirect defiance or ironical challenge; as if he had said, If any will still venture to accuse me, *let us stand up together*. The same thing is then expressed in other words, the form of interrogation and proposal being still retained. *Who is my adversary?* This is more literally rendered in the margin of the English Bible, *who is the master of my cause?* But even this fails to convey the precise sense of the original, and may be even said to reverse it, for the *master of my cause* seems to imply ascendancy or better right, and is not therefore applicable to a vanquished adversary whose case was just before described as hopeless. The truth is that the pronoun *my* belongs not to the last word merely but to the whole complex phrase, and לִי simply means 'possessor,' i. e. one to whom a given thing belongs. Thus a *cause-master* means one who has a cause or lawsuit, a party litigant; and *my cause-master* means one who has a controversy with me, my opponent or adversary; so that the common version really conveys the meaning better than what seems to be the more exact translation of the margin. In sense, the question is precisely parallel and tantamount to the one before it, *who will contend with me?* *Let him draw near to me*, confront me, or engage in conflict with me. The forensic figures of this verse, and some of its expressions, have repeatedly occurred in the course of the preceding chapters. (See ch. 41 : 1, 21. 43 : 9, 26 45 : 20. 48 : 14, 16.)



## CHAPTER I.

9. *Behold, the Lord Jehovah will help me; who (is) he (that) will condemn me?* The help specifically meant is that afforded by an advocate or judge to an injured party. The potential meaning (*can condemn*) is included in the future (*will condemn*), though not directly much less exclusively expressed by it. The last clause adds to the assurance of his own safety that of the destruction of his enemies. *All they* (or *all of them*, his adversaries, not expressly mentioned but referred to in the questions which precede) *like the garment shall grow old* (or *be worn out*), i. e. like the garment which is worn out or decays. *The moth shall devour them.* By a perfectly natural and common transition, the writer passes from comparison to metaphor, and having first transformed them into garments, says directly that *the moth shall devour them*, not as men, in which light he no longer views them, but as old clothes. This is a favourite comparison in Scripture to express a gradual but sure decay. (Compare ch. 51 : 8 and Hos. 5 : 12.) In Job 13 : 28. Ps. 39 : 12, it seems to denote the effect of pining sickness.

10. *Who among you is a fearer of Jehovah, hearkening to the voice of his servant, who walketh in darkness and there is no light to him? Let him trust in the name of Jehovah, and lean upon his God.* The same sense may be attained by closing the interrogation at *his servant*, and reading the remainder of the sentence thus : *whoso walketh in darkness and hath no light, let him trust etc.* Obedience to the word is implied in hearing it, but not expressed. Darkness is here used as a natural and common figure for distress (See above, ch. 8 : 20. 9 : 1.) Trusting in the *name* of Jehovah is not simply trusting in himself, or in the independent self existence which that name implies, but in his manifested attributes, attested by experience, which seems to be the full sense of the word *name*, as applied to God in the Old Testament. Two exegetical questions, in relation to this verse, have much divided and perplexed interpreters. The

first has respect to the person speaking and the objects of address; the other to the Servant of Jehovah. These questions, from their close connection and their mutual dependence, may be most conveniently discussed together. There would be no absurdity, nor even inconsistency, in supposing that *his servant* means the prophet or the prophets indefinitely, as the organs of the divine communications. This may be granted even by those who give the title a very different meaning elsewhere, as it cannot reasonably be supposed that so indefinite a name, and one of such perpetual occurrence, is invariably used in its most pregnant and emphatic sense. It is certain, on the contrary, that it is frequently applied to the prophets and to other public functionaries of the old economy. There is therefore no absurdity in Calvin's explanation of the phrase as here descriptive of God's ministers or messengers in general, to whom those who fear him are required to submit. The verse may then be connected immediately with what precedes, as the words of the same speaker. But while all this is unquestionably true, it cannot be denied that the frequency and prominence with which the Servant of Jehovah is exhibited in these Later Prophecies, as one distinguished from the ordinary ministry, makes it more natural to make that application of the words in this case, if it be admissible. The only difficulty lies in the mention of the Servant of Jehovah in the third person, while the preceding context is to be considered as his own words. (See above, on ch. 49 : 1.) This objection may be easily removed, if we assume that the words of the Servant of Jehovah are concluded in the preceding verse, and that in the one before us the Prophet goes on to speak in his own person. This assumption, although not demonstrably correct, agrees well with the dramatic form of the context, both before and after, and the frequent changes of person without any explicit intimation, which even the most rigorous interpreters are under the necessity of granting. On this hypoth-

esis, which seems to be approved by the latest as well as the older writers, the Servant of Jehovah here referred to is the same ideal person who appears at the beginning of the forty-ninth and forty second chapters, namely, the Messiah and his People as his type and representative, to whose instructions in the name of God the world must hearken if it would be saved. The question, which part of the complex person here predominates, must be determined by observing what is said of him. If the exhortation of the verse were naturally applicable to the world at large, as distinguished from the chosen people, then the latter might be readily supposed to be included under the description of the Servant of Jehovah. But as the terms employed appear to be descriptive of the people of Jehovah, or of some considerable class among them, the most probable conclusion seems to be, that by the Servant of Jehovah we are here to understand the Head as distinguished from the Body, with a secondary reference, perhaps, to his official representatives, so far as he employs them in communicating even with the Body itself.

11. *Lo, all of you kindling fire, girding sparks (or fiery darts), go in the light of your fire, and in the sparks ye have kindled. From my hand is this to you ; in pain (or at the place of torment) shall ye lie down.* The construction of the first clause is ambiguous, as *kindling* and *girding*, with their adjuncts, may be either the predicates or subjects of the proposition. The great majority of writers explain the participles as the subject of the sentence, or a description of the object of address, *all of you kindling*, i. e. all of you who kindle. Thus understood, the clause implies that the speaker is here turning from one class of hearers to another, from the Gentiles to the Jews, or from the unbelieving portion of the latter to the pious, or still more generally from the corresponding classes of mankind at large, without either national or local limitation. The wider sense

agrees best with the comprehensive terms of the passage, whatever specific applications may be virtually comprehended in it or legitimately deducible from it. There is also a difference of opinion with respect to the import of the figures. The rabbinical interpreters suppose the fire to denote the wrath of God, in proof of which they are able to allege, not only the general usage of the emblem in that sense, but the specific combination of this very noun and verb in Deut. 32 : 22 Jer. 15 : 14. 17 : 4. In all these cases the meaning of the figure is determined by the addition of the words *in my anger*. (See above, on ch. 48 : 9) Common to all the explanations is the radical idea of a fire kindled by themselves to their own eventual destruction. This result is predicted, as in many other cases, under the form of a command or exhortation to persist in the course which must finally destroy them. *Go* (i. e. go on) *in the light of your fire*. *From my hand is this to you*, i. e. my power has decreed and will accomplish what is now about to be declared, viz. that you shall lie down in sorrow, or a place of sorrow, if we give the noun the local sense usual in words of this formation. The expression is a general one, denoting final ruin, and of course includes, although it may not specifically signify, a future state of misery.

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## CHAPTER LI.

INTERPRETERS are much divided with respect to the particular period which constitutes the subject of this prophecy. The modern Jews regard it as a promise of deliverance from their present exile and dispersion by the Messiah whom they still expect. The Christian Fathers refer it to the time of the

first advent. Modern writers are divided between this hypothesis and that which confines it to the Babylonish exile. The truth appears to be, that this chapter is a direct continuation of the preceding declarations with respect to the vocation of the Church and the divine administration towards her. The possibility of her increase, as previously promised, is evinced by the example of Abraham, from whom all Israel descended, vs 1-3. In like manner many shall be added from the gentiles, vs. 4-6. Their enemies shall not only fail to destroy them, but shall be themselves destroyed, vs. 7, 8. This is confirmed by another historical example, that of Egypt, vs. 9, 10. The same assurances are then repeated, with a clearer promise of the new dispensation, vs. 11-16. The chapter closes with a direct address to Zion, who, though helpless in herself and destitute of human aid, is sure of God's protection and of the destruction of her enemies and his, vs. 17-23.

1. *Hearken unto me!* A common formula, when the writer or speaker turns away from one object of address to another. It is here used because he is about to address himself to the faithful servants of Jehovah, the true Israel, who are described as *seeking after righteousness*, i. e. making it the end of all their efforts to be righteous, or conformed to the will of God. The original application of the phrase here used is by Moses (Deut. 16 : 20), from whom it is copied twice by Solomon (Prov. 15 : 9. 21 : 21), and twice by Paul (1 Tim. 6 : 11. 2 Tim. 2 : 22.) The same apostle uses, in the same sense, the more general expression, *follow after good* (1 Thess 5 : 15), which is also used by David (Ps. 33 : 21, comp. Ps. 34 : 15). The same class of persons is then described as *seeking* (or *seekers of*) *Jehovah*, i. e. seeking his presence, praying to him, worshipping him, consulting him. The first description is more abstract, the second expresses a personal relation to Jehovah; both together are descriptive of the righteous as distinguished from

the wicked. Now as these have ever been comparatively few, not only in relation to the heathen world, but in relation to the spurious members of the church itself, a promise of vast increase (like that in ch. 49 : 18-21) might well appear incredible. In order to remove this doubt, the Prophet here appeals, not, as in many other cases, to the mere omnipotence of God, but to a historical example of precisely the same kind, viz. that of Abraham, from whom the race of Israel had already sprung, in strict fulfilment of a divine promise. *Look unto the rock (from which) ye have been hewn, and to the hole of the pit (from which) ye have been digged.*

2. *Look unto Abraham your father and unto Sarah (that) bare you.* That Sarah is mentioned chiefly for rhythmical effect, may be inferred from the writer's now confining what he says to Abraham alone. Instead of speaking further of both parents, he now says, *For I have called him one*; which does not mean, I have declared him to be such or so described him, but I have called (i. e. chosen, designated) him, when he was only one, i. e. a solitary individual, although the destined father of a great nation (Gen. 12 : 2). This sense of the word *one* is clear from Ezek. 33 : 24, where, with obvious allusion to this verse, it is put in opposition to *many*. *Abraham was ONE, and he inherited the land; and we are MANY, (much more then) is the land given to us for an inheritance.* The same antithesis is far more obvious and appropriate in this place, than that between Abraham, as sole heir of the promise, and the rest of men, who were excluded from it. The design of the Prophet is not so much to magnify the honour put upon Abraham by choosing him out of the whole race to be the father of the faithful, as it is to show the power and faithfulness of God in making this *one man* a nation like the stars of heaven for multitude, according to the promise (Gen. 15 : 5). Interpreters, with almost perfect unanimity, explain the two verbs at the end of this verse as expressing past



time (*and I blessed him and caused him to increase*), although the preterite translation is entirely gratuitous and therefore ungrammatical. The masoretic pointing, it is true, is not of absolute authority, but it is of the highest value as the record of an ancient critical tradition; and the very fact that it departs in this case from the sense which all interpreters have felt to be most obvious and natural, creates a strong presumption that it rests upon some high authority or some profound view of the Prophet's meaning. And we find accordingly that by adhering to the strict sense of the future, we not only act in accordance with a most important general principle of exegesis but obtain a sense which, though less obvious than the common one, is really better in itself and better suited to the context. According to the usual interpretation, this verse simply asserts the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham, leaving the reader to connect it with what follows as he can. But by a strict translation of the futures, they are made to furnish an easy and natural transition from the one case to the other, from the great historical example cited to the subject which it was intended to illustrate. The concise phrase, *one I called him*, really includes a citation of the promise made to Abraham, and suggests the fact of its fulfilment, so far as this had yet taken place. The Prophet, speaking in Jehovah's name, then adds a declaration that the promise should be still more gloriously verified. As if he had said, I promised to bless him and increase him, and I did so, *and I will bless him and increase him* (still). But how? By showing mercy to his seed, as I have determined and begun to do. This last idea is expressed in the first clause of the next verse, which is then no longer incoherent or abrupt, but in the closest and most natural connection with what goes before. This consideration might have less force if the illustration had been drawn from the experience of another race, for instance from the history of Egypt or Assyria, or even from the increase of the sons of Lot or Ishmael. But

when the promise which he wished to render credible is really a repetition or continuation of the one which he cites as an illustrative example, the intimate connection thus established or revealed between them is a strong proof that the explanation which involves it is the true one.

3. *For Jehovah hath comforted Zion.* As soon as the strict sense of the futures in v. 2 has been reinstated, the connection becomes obvious. 'I have blessed and increased him, and I bless and increase him; *for* Jehovah has begun to comfort Zion.' The comparison of ch. 40 : 1 shows what we are here to understand by Zion, viz Jehovah's people, of which it was the capital, the sanctuary, and the symbol. What is there commanded is here, in a certain sort, performed, or its performance more distinctly and positively pronounced. *He hath comforted all her wastes* (or ruins), i. e. restored cheerfulness to what was wholly desolate. This phrase proves nothing as to the Prophet's viewing Zion merely as a ruinous city, since in any case this is the substratum of his metaphor. The question is not whether he has reference to Zion or Jerusalem as a town, but whether this town is considered merely as a town, and mentioned for its own sake, or in the sense before explained, as the established representative and emblem of the church or chosen people. (See above, on ch. 49 : 21.) *And hath placed* (or made) *her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord.* This beautiful comparison is the strongest possible expression of a joyful change from total barrenness and desolation to the highest pitch of fertility and beauty. It is closely copied in Ezekiel 31 : 9; but the same comparison, in more concise terms, is employed by Moses (Gen. 13 : 10). Even there, notwithstanding what is added about Egypt, but still more unequivocally here, the reference is not to a garden or to pleasure-grounds in general, as Luther and several of the later Germans have assumed, with no small damage to the force and

beauty of their versions, but to *Eden* as a proper name, the garden of Jehovah, the *Paradise*, as the Septuagint renders it, both here and in Gen. 2 : 8, the grand historical and yet ideal designation of the most consummate terrene excellence, analogous, if not still more nearly related, to the Grecian pictures of Arcadia and of Tempe. *Joy and gladness shall be found in her*, i. e. in Zion, thus transformed into a paradise. *Shall be found* does not simply mean *shall be*, but also that they shall be there accessible, not only present in their abstract essence, as it were, but in the actual experience of those who dwell there. *Thanksgiving and the voice of melody*. The music of the common version of this last clause is at once too familiar and too sacred to be superseded, simply for the purpose of expressing more distinctly the exact sense of the last word, which originally signifies the sound of an instrument or instrumental music, but is afterwards used to denote song in general, or rather as a vehicle of praise to God.

4. *Attend (or hearken) unto me, my people ; and my nation, unto me give ear*. This may seem to be a violation of the usage which has been already stated as employing this form of speech to indicate a change in the object of address. But such a change, although a slight one, takes place even here ; for he seems no longer to address those seeking righteousness exclusively, but the whole body of the people as such. The next clause explains what it is that they are thus called upon to hear, viz. that *law from me shall go forth*, i. e. revelation or the true religion, as an expression of God's will, and consequently man's rule of duty. In like manner Paul describes the gospel as the *law of faith* (Rom 3 : 27), not binding upon one race or nation merely, but *by the commandment of the everlasting God made known to all nations for the obedience of faith* (Rom. 16 : 26). The meaning of the clause is that the nations can expect illumination only from one quarter. The same thing

is then said in another form. *And my judgment for the light of the nations* (as in ch. 42 : 6. 49 : 6) *will I cause to rest*, i. e. fix, establish.

5. *Near (is) my righteousness*, i. e. the exhibition of it in the changes previously promised and threatened. *Near*, as often elsewhere in the prophecies, is an indefinite expression which describes it simply as approaching, and as actually near to the perceptions of the Prophet or to any one who occupies the same point of vision. *Gone forth is my salvation*. Not only is the purpose formed, and the decree gone forth, but the event itself, in the sense just explained, may be described as past or actually passing. *And my arms shall judge the nations*. As the foregoing clause contains a promise, some interpreters suppose it to be necessary to give *judge* the favourable sense of vindicating, righting (as in ch. 1 : 17, 23), or at least the generic one of ruling (as in 1 Sam. 8 : 5). But nothing can be more in keeping with the usage of the Scriptures, and of this book in particular, than the simultaneous exhibition of God's justice in his treatment both of friends and foes. (Compare ch. 1 : 27.) *For me shall the islands wait*, i. e. for me they must wait ; until I reveal myself they must remain in darkness. (See above, on ch. 42 : 4.) The usual sense of *islands* is entirely appropriate here, as a poetical or representative expression for countries in general, with more particular reference to those across the sea. *And in my arm they shall hope*, i. e. in the exercise of my almighty power. As in ch. 42 : 6, the sense is not so much that they shall exercise a feeling of trust, but that this will be their only hope or dependence. To be enlightened, they must wait for my revelation ; to be saved, for the exertion of my power. It is not descriptive, therefore, of the feelings of the nations after the way of salvation is made known to them, but of their desperate and helpless condition until they hear it.

6. *Raise to the heavens your eyes, and look unto the earth beneath.* A similar form of address occurs above, in ch. 40:26. (Compare Gen. 15:5.) Heaven and earth are here put, as in many other places, for the whole frame of nature. The next clause explains why they are called upon to look. *For the heavens like smoke are dissolved or driven away.* Most writers give this verb a future sense (or a present one as an evasive substitute), because the real future follows; but for this very reason it may be presumed that the writer used distinct forms to express distinct ideas, and that he first gives a vivid description of the dissolution as already past, and then foretells its consummation as still future. *And the earth like the garment (which grows old) shall grow old (or wear out).* The same comparison occurs above in ch. 50:9, and serves to identify the passages as parts of one continued composition. *And their inhabitants shall die.* The translation recommended by analogy and usage as well as by the testimony of the ancient versions is, *they shall likewise perish*, to which there may possibly be an allusion in our Saviour's words recorded in Luke 13:3, 5. The contrast to this general destruction is contained in the last clause. *And my salvation to eternity shall be, and my righteousness shall not be broken*, i. e. shall not cease from being what it is, in which sense the same verb is evidently used by Isaiah elsewhere (ch. 7:8). In this as in many other cases, *salvation and righteousness* are not synonymous but merely correlative as cause and effect. (See above, on ch. 42:6.) The only question as to this clause is whether it is a hypothetical or absolute proposition. If the former, then the sense is that until (or even if) the frame of nature be dissolved, the justice and salvation of Jehovah shall remain unshaken. The other interpretation understands the first clause as a positive and independent declaration that the heavens and earth shall be dissolved. All these hypotheses are reconcilable by making the first clause mean, as similar expressions do mean elsewhere,

that the most extraordinary changes shall be witnessed, moral and physical; but that amidst them all this one thing shall remain unchangeable, the righteousness of God as displayed in the salvation of his people. (See ch. 40 : 8. 65 : 17. Matt. 5 : 18. 1 John 2 : 17.)

7. *Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, people (with) my law in their heart; fear not the reproach of men, and by their scoffs be not broken* (in spirit, i. e. terrified). The distinction here implied is still that between the righteous and the wicked as the two great classes of mankind. Those who are described in v. 1 as *seeking after righteousness* are here said to *know it*, i. e. know it by experience. The presence of the law in the heart denotes not mere affection for it but a correct apprehension of it, as the heart in Hebrew is put for the whole mind or soul; it is therefore a just parallel to *knowing* in the other member of the clause. The opposite class, or those who know not what is right, and who have not God's law in their heart, are comprehended under the generic title *man*, with particular reference to the derivation of the Hebrew word from a root meaning to be weak or sickly, so that its application here suggests the idea of their frailty and mortality, as a sufficient reason why God's people should not be afraid of them.

8. *For like the (moth-eaten) garment shall the moth devour them, and like the (worm-eaten) wool shall the worm devour them; and my righteousness to eternity shall be, and my salvation to an age of ages.* The same contrast between God's immutability and the brief duration of his enemies, is presented in ch. 50 : 9, and in v. 6 above.

9. *Awake, awake, put on strength, arm of Jehovah, awake, as (in the) days of old, the ages of eternities; art not thou the same that hewed Rahab in pieces, that wounded the serpent (or dragon?)*



The only probable hypothesis is that which puts the words into the mouth of the people or of the Prophet as their representative. The verse is then a highly figurative but by no means an obscure appeal to the former exertion of that power, as a reason for its renewed exertion in the present case. The particular example cited seems to be the overthrow of Egypt, here described by the enigmatical name *Rahab*, for the origin and sense of which see above, on ch. 30 : 7. The same thing is probably intended by the parallel term *dragon*, whether this be understood to mean an aquatic monster in the general, or more specifically the crocodile, the natural and immemorial emblem of Egypt.

10. *Art not thou the same that dried the sea, the waters of the great deep, that placed the depths of the sea (as) a way for the passage of redeemed ones?* The allusion to the overthrow of Egypt is carried out and completed by a distinct mention of the miraculous passage of the Red Sea. The interrogative form of the sentence is equivalent to a direct affirmation that it is the same arm, or in other words, that the same power which destroyed the Egyptians for the sake of Israel still exists, and may again be exerted for a similar purpose. The confidence that this will be done is expressed somewhat abruptly in the next verse.

11. *And the ransomed of Jehovah shall return and come to Zion with shouting, and everlasting joy upon their heads; gladness and joy shall overtake (them), sorrow and sighing have fled away.* The same words occur in ch. 35 : 10.

12. *I, I, am he that comforteth you; who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of man (who) is to die, and of the son of man who (as) grass is to be given?* The important truth is here reiterated, that Jehovah is not only the deliverer but the sole deliverer of his people, and as the necessary consequence, that

they have not only no need but no right to be afraid, which seems to be the force of the interrogation, *Who art thou that thou shouldest be afraid*, or still more literally, *who art thou and thou hast been afraid?* i. e. consider who is thy protector and then recollect that thou hast been afraid. The last verb is commonly explained as if simply equivalent to *shall be* or *shall become*, which is hardly consistent with its usage elsewhere. Some adhere more closely to the strict sense by supposing it to mean *he shall be given up*, abandoned to destruction

13. *And hast forgotten Jehovah thy Maker, spreading the heavens and founding the earth, and hast trembled continually all the day, from before the wrath of the oppressor, as he made ready to destroy? And where is (now) the wrath of the oppressor?* The form of expression in the first clause makes it still more clear that the statement in v. 12 is not merely hypothetical but historical, implying that they had actually feared man and forgotten God. The epithets added to God's name are not merely ornamental, much less superfluous, but strictly appropriate, because suggestive of almighty power, which ensured the performance of his promise and the effectual protection of his people. *Continually all the day* is an emphatic pleonasm, such as are occasionally used in every language. *From before* is a common Hebrew idiom for *because of*, *on account of*, but may here be taken in its strict sense as expressive of alarm and flight before an enemy. (See ch. 2: 19.) Some render כְּאִם *as if*, to which there are two objections: first, the want of any satisfactory authority from usage; and secondly, the fact that the words then imply that no such attempt has really been made. *As if he could destroy* would be appropriate enough, because it is merely an indirect denial of his power to do so; but it cannot be intended to deny that he had aimed at it. The word translated *make ready*, is particularly used in reference to the preparation of the bow for shooting by the adjustment of the

arrow on the string; some suppose that it specifically signifies the act of taking aim. (Compare Ps. 7 : 13. 11 : 2. 21 : 13.) The question at the close implies that the wrath is at an end and the oppressor himself vanished. We have no authority for limiting this reference to any particular historical event. It is as if he had said, How often have you trembled when your oppressors threatened to destroy you; and where are they now?

14. *He hastens bowing to be loosed, and he shall not die in the pit, and his bread shall not fail.* The essential idea is that of liberation, but with some obscurity in the expression. The modern lexicographers appear to be agreed that the radical meaning of the verb here translated *bowing* is that of bending, either backward (as in ch. 63 : 1) or downward (as in Jer. 48 : 12). The latest versions accordingly explain it as a poetical description of the prisoner bowed down under chains. With still more exactness it may be translated as a participle qualifying the indefinite subject of the verb at the beginning. There is however no objection to the usual construction of the word as a noun; the sense remains the same in either case. The next clause is sometimes taken as an indirect, subjunctive proposition, *that he may not die*; but it is best to make it a direct affirmation that *he shall not*. The general sense is still that the captive shall not perish in captivity. This general promise is then rendered more specific by the assurance that he shall not starve to death, which seems to be the only sense that can be put upon the last clause.

15. *And I (am) Jehovah thy God, rousing the sea and then its waves roar; Jehovah of Hosts (is) his name.* Another appeal to the power of God as a pledge for the performance of his promise. *וַיִּזְעַק* has been understood in two directly opposite senses, that of *stilling* and that of *agitating*. The first is strongly recom-

mended by the not unfrequent use of the derivative conjugations in the sense of quieting or being quiet.

16. *And I have put my words in thy mouth, and in the shadow of my hand I have hid thee, to plant the heavens, and to found the earth, and to say to Zion, Thou art my people.* That these words are not addressed to Zion or the Church is evident; because in the last clause she is spoken of in the third person, and addressed in the next verse with a sudden change to the feminine form from the masculine which is here used. That it is not the Prophet may be readily inferred from the nature of the work described in the second clause. The only remaining supposition is that the Messiah is the object of address, and that his work or mission is here described, viz. to plant the heavens, i. e. to establish them, perhaps with allusion to the erection of a tent by the insertion of its stakes in the ground. The new creation thus announced can only mean the reproduction of the church in a new form, by what we usually call the change of dispensations. The outward economy should all be new, and yet the identity of the chosen people should remain unbroken. For he whom God had called to plant new heavens and to found a new earth was likewise commissioned to say to Zion, Thou art still my people.

17. This may be considered a continuation of the address begun at the end of the preceding verse. The same voice which there said, *Thou art my people*, may be here supposed to say, *Rouse thyself! rouse thyself! Arise Jerusalem! (thou) who hast drunk at the hand of Jehovah the cup of his wrath; the bowl of the cup of reeling thou hast drunk, thou hast wrung (or sucked) out, i. e. drunk its very dregs.* The cup is of course put for its contents, a natural figure for anything administered or proffered by a higher power. (Compare Jer. 25 : 15, 16. 49 : 12. 51 : 7. Lam. 4 : 21. Ob. 16. Ezek. 23 : 34. Rev. 14 : 10.)

18. *There is no guide to her (or no one leading her) of all the sons she has brought forth, and no one grasping her hand of all the sons she has brought up.* From addressing Zion in the second person, he now proceeds to speak of her in the third. This verse is not so much descriptive of unnatural abandonment as it is of weakness. The sense is not that no one will, but that no one can protect or guide her. Some interpreters suppose the figure of a drunken person to be still continued. The mother and the sons, i. e. the people collectively and individually, are distinguished only by a figure of speech.

19. *Both those things are befalling (or about to befall) thee; who will mourn for thee? Wasting and ruin, famine and sword; who (but) I will comfort thee?* A difficulty here is the mention of two things in the first clause, followed by an enumeration of four in the second. Some suppose the two things to refer to what precedes, others to wasting and ruin only. Others think that wasting and famine, ruin and sword, are to be combined as synonyms. The modern writers understand the second phrase as an explanation or specification of the first. As if he had said, *wasting and ruin* (such as are produced by) *famine and the sword*. The general meaning of the verse evidently is that her grief was beyond the reach of any human comforter.

20. *Thy sons were faint (or helpless).* This explains why they did not come to her assistance. *They lie at the head of all the streets.* A conspicuous place is evidently meant, but whether the corners or the higher part of an uneven street, is a question of small moment. *Like a wild bull in a net*, i. e. utterly unable to exert their strength. The true cause of their lying thus is given in the last clause. *Filled with the wrath of Jehovah, the rebuke of thy God.* The expression *thy God* is emphatic, and suggests that her sufferings proceeded from the alienation of her own divine protector. This verse is a figurative represen-



tation of the helplessness of Zion or the Church when partially forsaken for a time by her offended Head.

21. *Therefore pray hear this, thou suffering one and drunken but not with wine.* The antithesis in the last clause is to be completed from the context. Not with wine, but with the wrath of God, which had already been described as a *cup of reeling* or intoxication. The same negative expression is employed in ch. 29:9.

22. *Thus saith thy Lord, Jehovah, and thy God—he will defend (or avenge) his people—Behold, I have taken from thy hand the cup of reeling (or intoxication), the bowl of the cup of my fury; thou shalt not add (continue or repeat) to drink it any more (or again).* All are compelled to admit that the writer has reference less to the place than to the people of Jerusalem, and even to this only as the representative of the entire nation; a concession which goes far to confirm the explanation of the “Zion” of these prophecies which has been already given. It is usual to explain *קריב עמו* as a relative clause (*who pleads the cause of his people*); but it is simpler, and at the same time more in accordance with the genius of the language, to regard it as a brief but complete parenthetical proposition. The same character is often ascribed elsewhere to Jehovah. (See ch. 49:25. and compare 34:8. 41:11.) As the cup was the cup of God’s wrath, not of man’s, so God himself is represented as withdrawing it from the sufferer’s lips, when its purpose is accomplished.

23. *And put it into the hand of those that afflicted thee, that said to thy soul, Bow down and we will (or that we may) pass over; and thou didst lay thy back as the ground and as the street for the passengers.* *To thy soul* always implies a strong and commonly a painful affection of the mind in the object of address. *Who*



*said to thy soul* is then equivalent to saying, *who distressed thy soul by saying*. The last clause is commonly explained as a proverbial or at least a metaphorical description of extreme humiliation, although history affords instances of literal humiliation in this form. Such is the treatment of Valerian by Sapor, as described by Lactantius and Aurelius Victor; with which may be compared the conduct of Sesostris to his royal captives, as described by Diodorus, and that of Pope Alexander III to the Emperor Frederic, as recorded by the Italian historians. For scriptural parallels see Josh. 10 : 24 and Judg. 1 : 7. If we had any right or reason to restrict this prediction to a single period or event, the most obvious would be the humiliation of the Chaldees, who are threatened with the cup of God's wrath in Jer. 25 : 26.

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## CHAPTER LII.

HOWEVER low the natural Israel may sink, the true Church shall become more glorious than ever, being freed from the impurities connected with her former state, v. 1. This is described as a captivity, from which she is exhorted to escape, v. 2. Her emancipation is the fruit of God's gratuitous compassion, v. 3. As a nation she has suffered long enough, vs. 4, 5. The day is coming when the Israel of God shall know in whom they have believed, v. 6. The herald of the new dispensation is described as already visible upon the mountains, v. 7. The watchmen of Zion hail their coming Lord, v. 8. The very ruins of Jerusalem are summoned to rejoice, v. 9. The glorious change is witnessed by the whole world, v. 10. The true Church or Israel of God is exhorted to come out of

Jeremy, v. 11. This exodus is likened to the one from Egypt, but described as even more auspicious, v. 12. Its great leader, the Messiah, as the Servant of Jehovah, must be and is to be exalted, v. 13. And this exaltation shall bear due proportion to the humiliation which preceded it, vs. 14, 15.

1. *Awake, awake, put on thy strength, oh Zion! Put on thy garments of beauty, oh Jerusalem the Holy City! For no more shall there add (or continue) to come into thee an uncircumcised and unclean (person).* The encouraging assurances of the foregoing context are now followed by a summons similar to that in ch. 51 : 17, but in form approaching nearer to the apostrophe in ch. 51 : 9. To put on strength is a perfectly intelligible figure for resuming strength or taking courage, and is therefore entirely appropriate in this connection. That the city is here addressed only as a symbol of the nation, is certain from the next verse. *Beautiful garments* is by most interpreters regarded as a general expression meaning fine clothes or holiday dresses; but some suppose a special contrast with widow's weeds (2 Sam. 14 : 2) or prison-garments (2 Kings 25 : 29). Perhaps the Prophet here resumes the metaphor of ch. 49 : 18, where Zion's children are compared to bridal ornaments. *The Holy City*, literally, *city of holiness*, an epithet before applied to Zion (ch. 48 : 2), and denoting her peculiar consecration, and that of her people, to the service of Jehovah. (Compare Dan. 8 : 24.) Henceforth the name is to be more appropriate than ever, for the reason given in the last clause. *Uncircumcised* is an expression borrowed from the ritual law and signifying unclean. That it is not here used in its strict sense, is intimated by the addition of the general term. The restriction of these epithets to the Babylonians is purely arbitrary, and intended to meet the objection that Jerusalem was not free from heathen intrusion after the exile. The words contain a general promise of exemption from the contaminating

presence of the impure and unworthy, as a part of the blessedness and glory promised to God's people, as the end and solace of their various trials.

2. *Shake thyself from the dust, arise, sit, oh Jerusalem! loose the bands of thy neck, oh captive daughter Zion (or of Zion)!* The dust, from which she is to free herself by shaking it off, is either that in which she had been sitting as a mourner (ch. 3 : 26. 47 : 1. Job 2 : 13), or that which, in token of her grief, she had sprinkled on her head (Job 2 : 12). The common English version, *sit down*, until explained, suggests an idea directly opposite to that intended. Some make it mean *sit up*, in opposition to a previous recumbent posture. To this it may be objected, that the verb is elsewhere absolutely used in the sense of *sitting down*, especially in reference to sitting on the ground as a sign of grief; and also, that the other verb does not merely qualify this, but expresses a distinct idea, not merely that of rising but that of standing up, which is inconsistent with an exhortation to sit up, immediately ensuing. As a whole, the verse is a poetical description of the liberation of a female captive from degrading servitude, designed to represent the complete emancipation of the Church from tyranny and persecution.

3. *For thus saith Jehovah, Ye were sold for nought, and not for money shall ye be redeemed.* These words are apparently designed to remove two difficulties in the way of Israel's deliverance, a physical and a moral one. The essential meaning is, that it might be effected rightly and easily. As Jehovah had received no price for them, he was under no obligations to renounce his right to them; and as nothing had been gained by their rejection, so nothing would be lost by their recovery. The only obscurity arises from the singular nature of the figure under which the truth is here presented, by the transfer

of expressions borrowed from the commercial intercourse of men to the free action of the divine sovereignty. The verse, as thus explained, agrees exactly with the terms of Ps. 44: 12. The reflexive meaning given in the English Version (*ye have sold yourselves*) is not sustained by usage nor required by the context.

4. *For thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Into Egypt went down my people at the first to sojourn there, and Assyria oppressed them for nothing.* The interpretation of this verse and the next has been not a little influenced by the assumption of one or more strongly marked antitheses. Thus some writers take it for granted that the Prophet here intended to contrast the Egyptian and Assyrian bondage. They accordingly explain the verse as meaning that the first introduction of Israel into Egypt was without any evil design upon the part of the Egyptians, who did not begin to oppress them until there arose a king who knew not Joseph (Ex. 1: 8), whereas the Assyrian deportation of Israel was from the beginning a high-handed act of tyranny. One commentator appears to exclude the supposition of a contrast altogether, and to understand the passage as a chronological enumeration of events, designed to show how much had been endured already as a reason why they should endure no more. (Compare ch. 40: 2.) In ancient times they were oppressed by the Egyptians, at a later period by Assyria, and later still by Babylonia, whose oppressions are supposed to be described in v. 5, either as already suffered, or as an object of prophetic foresight. This is the simplest and most natural interpretation, and is very strongly recommended by the difficulty of defining the antithesis intended on the other supposition. Most writers understand the last words as meaning *for nothing* or without cause, i. e. unjustly. The explanation of Assyria as meaning or including Babylonia, though not without authority from usage, is

as unnecessary here as in various other places where it has been proposed.

5. *And now, what is there to me here (what have I here), saith Jehovah, that my people is taken away for nothing, its rulers howl, saith Jchovah, and continually, all the day, my name is blasphemed?* Some understand *now* strictly as meaning *at the present time*, in opposition to the ancient times when Israel suffered at the hands of Egypt and Assyria. The same antithesis may be obtained by giving *now* a modified sense so as to mean *in the present case*, as distinguished from the two already mentioned. It would even be admissible to give the *now* its logical sense as substantially meaning *since these things are so*, although such a departure from the proper import of the word is by no means necessary. The other adverb, *here*, admits of no less various explanations. Some older writers understand it to mean *heaven* as the customary residence of God. (1 Kings 8: 30.) Some suppose it to mean *Babylon*, while others, with a bolder departure from the strict sense, understand it as equivalent to *in the present case*, viz. that of the Babylonian exile; which, however, even if correct in substance, is rather a paraphrase than a translation. With the meaning put upon this adverb varies the interpretation of the whole phrase, *what have I here?* If *here* means *in Babylon*, the sense would seem to be, what else have I to do here but to free my people? If it mean *in heaven*, then the question is, what is there to detain me here from going to the rescue of my people? If it mean *in the present case*, whether this be referred to the Babylonish exile or more generally understood, the best explanation of the question is, what have I gained in this case, any more than in the others, since my people are still taken from me without any compensation? The conclusion implied, though not expressed, is that in this as in the other instances referred to, a regard to his own honour, metaphorically represented as his

interest, requires that he should interpose for the deliverance of his people. The next clause likewise has been very variously explained. Among the vast majority of writers who retain the common meaning of the word translated rulers, the question chiefly in dispute is whether it denotes the native rulers of the Jews themselves, as in ch. 28 : 14, or their foreign oppressors, as in ch. 49 : 7. Most interpreters, however, seem disposed to understand it as meaning his foreign oppressors. The form of expression in the last clause is copied by Ezekiel (36 : 20, 23), but applied to a different subject ; and from that place, rather than the one before us, the Apostle quotes in Rom. 2 : 24.

6. *Therefore* (because my name is thus blasphemed) *my people shall know my name ; therefore in that day* (shall they know) *that I am he that said, Behold me !* The exact sense of the last words according to this construction is, 'I am he that spake (or promised) a Behold me?' To know the name of God, is to know his nature so far as it has been revealed ; and in this case more specifically, it is to know that the name blasphemed among the wicked was deserving of the highest honour. The second *therefore* is to be regarded pregnant and emphatic.

7. *How timely on the mountains are the feet of one bringing glad tidings, publishing peace, bringing glad tidings of good, publishing salvation, saying to Zion, Thy God reigneth.* The verb נִאֲרִי means to be suitable, becoming, opportune, and though not applied to time in either of the two cases where it occurs elsewhere, evidently admits of such an application, especially when there is no general usage to forbid it. It is here recommended by the context, which is much more coherent if we understand this verse as intimating that the help appears at the very juncture when it is most needed, than if we take it as a mere expression of delight. It is also favoured by the ana



logy of Nah. 1 : 15, where a similar connection is expressed by the word הִנֵּה. It is favoured lastly by the use of the Greek word *ὡγαῖοι* in Paul's translation of the verse (Rom 10 : 15), of which *ὡγα* in our copies of the Septuagint is probably a corruption. This Greek word, both from etymology and usage, most explicitly means *timely* or *seasonable*, although sometimes employed in the secondary sense of *beautiful* (Matt. 23 : 27. Acts 3 : 2), like the Hebrew נָאוֶה (Cant. 1 : 10), *decorus* in Latin, and *becoming* in English. The mountains meant may be the mountains round Jerusalem, or the word may be more indefinitely understood as adding a trait to the prophetic picture. The word מְבַשֵּׂר has no equivalent in English, and must therefore be expressed by a periphrasis, in order to include the two ideas of annunciation and the joyful character of that which is announced. The sense is perfectly expressed by the Greek *εὐαγγελιζόμενος*, but our derivatives, *evangelizing* and *evangelist*, would not convey the meaning to an English reader. The joyous nature of the tidings brought is still more definitely intimated in the next clause by the addition of the word *good*, which is not explanatory but intensive. The explanation of מְבַשֵּׂר as a collective referring to the prophets, or the messengers from Babylonia to Jerusalem, is perfectly gratuitous. The primary application of the term is to the Messiah, but in itself it is indefinite ; and Paul is therefore chargeable with no misapplication of the words when he applies them to the preachers of the gospel. The contents of the message are the manifestation of the reign of God, the very news which Christ and his forerunner published when they cried saying, The kingdom of God is at hand.

8. *The voice of thy watchmen ! They raise the voice, together will they shout ; for eye to eye shall they see in Jehovah's returning (i e. when he returns) to Zion.* The first clause is obviously a poetical apostrophe or exclamation. The second clause seems

to intimate that they should have still further cause to shout hereafter; they have already raised the voice, and ere long they shall all shout together. Because the prophets are elsewhere represented as *watchmen* on the walls of Zion (ch. 56 : 10. Jer. 6 : 17. Ez. 3 : 17. 33 : 2, 7); most interpreters attach that meaning to the figure here; but the restriction is unnecessary, since the application of a metaphor to one object does not preclude its application to another, and objectionable, as it mars the unity and beauty of the scene presented, which is simply that of a messenger of good news drawing near to a walled town, whose watchmen take up and repeat his tidings to the people within. The phrase *eye to eye*, or *in eye*, occurs only here and in Num. 14 : 14. It is properly descriptive of two persons so near as to look into each other's eyes. The phrases *face to face* (Ex. 33 : 11) and *mouth to mouth* (Num. 12 : 8) are kindred and analogous, but not identical with that before us. *They* (i. e. the people of Jerusalem or men in general) *shall see*. The transitive meaning (*restore* or *bring back*) ascribed to נִרְאֶה in this and many other places is doubtful and disputed. In this case the proper sense is not only appropriate but required by the context and the analogy of other places in which the reconciliation between God and his people is represented as a return after a long absence. (See above, on ch. 40 : 11.)

9. *Burst forth, shout together, ruins of Jerusalem! For Jehovah hath comforted his people, hath redeemed Jerusalem.* The phrase to burst forth into shouting, is a favourite expression with Isaiah (see above, ch. 14 : 7. 44 : 23. 49 : 13,\* and below, ch. 54 : 1. 55 : 12); but in this case the qualifying noun is exchanged for its verbal root, a combination which occurs elsewhere only in Ps. 98 : 4. As this word is never used in any other connection, and therefore denotes only this one kind of bursting, it may be considered as involving the idea of the whole phrase, and is so translated in the English Version

(*break forth into joy.*) *Together* may either mean *all of you*, or *at the same time* with the watchmen mentioned in v. 8. Such appeals to inanimate objects are of frequent occurrence in Isaiah. (See above, ch. 44 : 23. 49 : 13, and below, ch. 55 : 12.) The translation of the verbs in the last clause as presents is unnecessary and enfeebling, as it takes away the strong assurance always conveyed by the *præteritum propheticum*. See above, on ch. 49 : 13.

10. *Jehovah hath bared his holy arm to the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.* The allusion in the first clause is to the ancient military practice of going into battle with the right arm and shoulder bare. The same Hebrew verb is used in the same application by Ezekiel (4 : 7). The baring of the arm may be mentioned as a preparation for the conflict, or the act of stretching it forth may be included. The bare arm is here in contrast either with the long sleeves of the female dress, or with the indolent insertion of the hand into the bosom. (Ps. 74 : 11) The exertion of God's power is elsewhere expressed by the kindred figure of a great hand (Ex. 14 : 30), a strong hand (Ez. 20 : 34), or a hand stretched out (Is. 9 : 11). The act here described is the same that is described in ch. 51 : 9. The comparison of Jehovah to a warrior occurs above in ch. 42 : 13. Jehovah's arm is here described as *holy*, in its widest sense, as denoting the divine perfection, or 'whatever distinguishes between God and man, perhaps with special reference to his power, as that by which his deity is most frequently and clearly manifested to his creatures. Compare this clause with ch. 18 : 3. 33 : 13, and Ps. 98 : 3, where it is repeated word for word. Another coincidence between this passage of Isaiah and that Psalm has been already pointed out in expounding the foregoing verse.

11. *Away : away ! go out from thence ! the unclean touch not ! come out from the midst of her ! be clean (or cleanse yourselves) ye armour-bearers of Jehovah !* The first word in Hebrew is a verb, and literally means *depart* ; but there is something peculiarly expressive in the translation of it by an adverb. The analogy of ch. 48 : 20 seems to show that the Prophet had the departure from Babylon in view ; but the omission of the name here, and of any allusion to that subject in the context, forbids the restriction of the words any further than the writer has himself restricted them. The whole analogy of language and especially of poetical composition shows that Babylon is no more the exclusive object of the writer's contemplation than the local Zion and the literal Jerusalem in many of the places where those names are mentioned. Like other great historical events, particularly such as may be looked upon as critical conjunctures, the deliverance becomes a type, not only to the prophet, but to the poet and historian, not by any arbitrary process, but by a spontaneous association of ideas. As some names, even in our own day, have acquired a generic meaning and become descriptive of a whole class of events, so in the earliest authentic history, the Flood, the Fall of Sodom and Gomorrah, the Exodus, the Babylonish Exile, are continually used as symbols of divine interposition both in wrath and mercy. There is no inconsistency whatever, therefore, in admitting that the Prophet has the exodus from Babylon in view, and yet maintaining that his language has a far more extensive scope. The sense of armour-bearers is not only in the highest degree suitable to the idea of a solemn march, but strongly recommended by the fact that the same Hebrew phrase in historical prose is the appropriated title of an armour-bearer. (See 1 Sam. 14 : 1, 6, 7. 16 : 21.) At the same time the mention of the sacred vessels would scarcely be omitted in the description of this new exodus. Both explanations may be blended without any violation of usage, and with great advantage to the beauty of the passage, by sup-

posing an allusion to the mixture of the martial and the sacerdotal in the whole organization of the host of Israel during the journey through the wilderness. Not even in the crusades were the priest and soldier brought so near together, and so mingled, not to say identified, as in the long march of the chosen people from the Red Sea to the Jordan. By applying this key to the case before us, we obtain the grand though blended image of a march and a procession, an army and a church, a "sacramental host" bearing the sacred vessels not as Priests and Levites merely, but as the *armour-bearers of Jehovah*, the weapons of whose warfare, though not carnal, are mighty to the pulling down of strong holds. (2 Cor. 10 : 4.) With this comprehensive exposition of the clause agrees the clear and settled usage of the word in the wide sense of *implements*, including weapons on the one hand and vessels on the other. The application of the terms of this verse by John to the spiritual Babylon (Rev. 18 : 4), so far from standing in the way of the enlarged interpretation above given, really confirms it by showing that the language of the prophecy is suited to express far more than the literal exodus of Israel from Babylon.

12. *For not in haste shall ye go out, and in flight ye shall not depart ; for going before you (is) Jehovah, and bringing up your rear the God of Israel.* This verse is crowded with allusions to the earlier history of Israel, some of which consist in the adaptation of expressions with which the Hebrew reader was familiar, but which must of course be lost in a translation. Thus the hasty departure out of Egypt is not only recorded as a fact in the Mosaic history (Ex. 11 : 1. 12 : 33, 39), but designated by the very term here used (Ex. 12 : 11. Deut. 16 : 3), meaning terrified and sudden flight. There is likewise an obvious allusion to the cloudy pillar going sometimes before and sometimes behind the host (Ex. 14 : 19, 20), and possibly to Moses' poetical description of Jehovah as encompassing Israel with his

protection (Deut. 32:10). These minute resemblances are rendered still more striking by the distinction which the Prophet makes between the two events. The former exodus was hurried and disorderly; the one here promised shall be solemn and deliberate. The connection of the verse with that before it may be easily explained. The *for*, as in many other cases, has relation to an intermediate thought which may be easily supplied though not expressed. Or rather, it has reference to the promise, implied in the preceding exhortation, of protection and security. From this verse, taken in connection with the one before it, we may derive a confirmation of our previous conclusions; first, that the image there presented is a military no less than a priestly one; and secondly, that this whole passage has a wider scope and higher theme than the deliverance from Babylon, because the latter is no more vividly exhibited to view than the deliverance from Egypt; and if this is a mere emblem, so may that be, nay it must be, when we add to the consideration just presented, the result of the inductive process hitherto pursued in the interpretation of these prophecies, viz. that the deliverance of Israel from exile does not constitute the theme of the predictions, but is simply one remarkable historico-prophetical example which the Prophet cites in illustration of his general teachings as to the principle and mode of the Divine administration, and his special predictions of a great and glorious change to be connected with the abrogation of the old economy.

13. *Behold, my servant shall do wisely, (and as a necessary consequence) shall rise and be exalted and high exceedingly.* The parenthesis introduced to show the true relation of the clauses serves at the same time to preclude the necessity of giving the Hebrew verb the doubtful and secondary sense of *prospering*. The parallel expressions are not synonymous but simply correlative, the mutual relation being that of cause and effect. He



shall be exalted because he shall act wisely, in the highest sense i. e. shall use the best means for the attainment of the highest end, not merely as a possible result, but as a necessary consequence. We have no right, however, to substitute the one for the other, or to merge the primary idea in its derivative. The version of the Septuagint (*συνήσει*) and the Vulgate (*intelliget*) is only defective because it makes the verb denote the possession of intelligence, and not its active exercise, which is required by the Hiphil form and by the connection, as well here as in the parallel passage, Jer. 23 : 5. (Compare 1 Kings 2 : 3.) Connected with this verse there are two exegetical questions which are famous as the subject of dispute among interpreters. The first and least important has respect to the division and arrangement of the text, viz. whether this verse is to be connected with what goes before, or separated from it and regarded as the introduction of a new subject. The former method is adopted in the older versions and in the masoretic Hebrew text. The latter was pursued in the ancient distribution of the book, with which the Fathers were familiar, and has been adopted in our own day by most writers on Isaiah. The only satisfactory method, as we have already seen, is to regard the whole as a continuous composition, and to recognize the usual division into chapters, simply because it is familiar and on the whole convenient, although sometimes very injudicious and erroneous. According to this view of the matter, the precise distribution of the chapters is of no more importance than that of the paragraphs in any modern book, which may sometimes facilitate and sometimes hinder its convenient perusal, but can never be regarded as authoritative in determining the sense. In the case immediately before us, it is proper to resist the violent division of the chapter; because when read in its natural connection, it shows how easy the transition was from the foregoing promise of deliverance to the description of the Servant of Jehovah as the leader of the grand march just described, and confirms our

previous conclusions as to the exalted meaning of the promises in question, and against a forced restriction of them to the Babylonish exile. At the same time it is equally important that the intimate connection of these verses with the following chapter should be fully recognized, in order that the Servant of the Lord, whose humiliation and exaltation are here mentioned, may be identified with that mysterious person whose expiatory sufferings and spiritual triumphs form the great theme of the subsequent context. It follows, therefore, that the meaning of the whole passage, to the end of the fifty-third chapter, turns upon the question, Who is meant by *my servant* in the verse before us? An individual or a collective body? If the latter, is it Israel as a whole, or its better portion, or the Prophets, or the Priesthood? If the former, is it Moses, Abraham, Uzziah, Josiah, Jeremiah, Cyrus, an anonymous prophet, the author himself, or the Messiah? This is the other exegetical question which has been referred to, as connected with this verse and materially affecting the interpretation of the whole passage. The answer to this question, which at once suggests itself as the result of all our previous inquiries, is that the Servant of Jehovah here, as in ch. 42: 1-6 and ch. 49: 1-9, is the Messiah, but presented rather in his own personality than in conjunction with his people. According to the rule already stated, the idea of the Body here recedes, and that of the Head becomes exclusively conspicuous; because, as we shall see below, the Servant of Jehovah is exhibited, not merely as a teacher or a ruler, but as an expiatory sacrifice. This application of the verse and the whole passage to the Messiah was held by the oldest school of Jewish interpreters. In its favour may be urged, besides the tradition of the synagogue and church, the analogy of the other places where the Servant of Jehovah is mentioned, the wonderful agreement of the terms of the prediction with the character and history of Jesus Christ, and the express application of the passage to him by himself and his in-

spired apostles, who appear to have assumed it as the basis of their doctrine with respect to the atonement, and to have quoted it comparatively seldom only because they had it constantly in view, as appears from their numerous allusions to it, and the perfect agreement of their teachings with it. The detailed proofs of the Messianic exposition will be given in the course of the interpretation. In the verse immediately before us all that need be added is, that the extraordinary exaltation promised in the last clause is such as could never have been looked for by the Prophet, for himself or for his order, especially upon the modern supposition, that he lived in the time of the exile, when the grounds for such an expectation were far less than at any former period. The objection, that the title *servant* is not applied elsewhere to Messiah, would have little force if true, because the title in itself is a general one and may be applied to any chosen instrument. It is not true, however, as the single case of Zech 3 : 8 will suffice to show, without appealing to the fact that the same application of the title, either partial or exclusive, has been found admissible above in ch. 42 : 1. 49 : 3, and 50 : 10.

14, 15. *As many were shocked at thee—so marred from man his look, and his form from the sons of man—so shall he sprinkle many nations; concerning him shall kings stop their mouth, because what was not recounted to them they have seen, and what they had not heard they have perceived.* His exaltation shall bear due proportion to his humiliation; the contempt of men shall be exchanged for wonder and respect. According to the common agreement of interpreters, v. 14 is the protasis and v. 15 the apodosis of the same sentence, the correlative clauses being introduced, as usual in cases of comparison, by *as* and *so*. The construction is somewhat embarrassed by the intervening *so* at the beginning of the last clause of v. 14, which most interpreters however treat as a parenthesis explanatory of the first clause.

'as many were shocked at thee—because his countenance was so marred, etc. so shall he sprinkle many nations,' etc. A simpler construction, though it does not yield so clear a sense, would be to assume a double apodosis: '*as* many were shocked at thee, *so* was his countenance marred, etc., *so* also shall he sprinkle,' etc. As thus explained the sense would be, their abhorrence of him was not without reason and it shall not be without requital. The first verb expresses a mixture of surprise, contempt, and aversion; it is frequently applied to extraordinary instances of suffering when viewed as divine judgments. (Lev. 26:32. Ezek. 27:35. Jer. 18:16. 19:8.) *Many* does not mean *all*, nor is *nations* to be anticipated from the other clause; there seems to be rather an antithesis between many individuals and many nations. As a single people had despised him, so the whole world should admire him. By *look* and *form* we are neither to understand a mean condition nor the personal appearance, but as an intermediate idea, the visible effects of suffering. The idiomatic phrase *from man*, may be taken simply as expressive of comparison (*more than other men*), or more emphatically of negation (*so as not to be human*), which are only different gradations of the same essential meaning. זָרַח is a technical term of the Mosaic law for *sprinkling* water, oil, or blood, as a purifying rite. This is a description, at the very outset, of the Servant of Jehovah as an expiatory purifier, one who must be innocent himself in order to cleanse others, an office and a character alike inapplicable either to the prophets as a class, or to Israel as a nation, or even to the better class of Jews, much more to any single individual except the One who claimed to be the Purifier of the guilty, and to whom many nations do at this day ascribe whatever purity of heart or life they either have or hope for. The next clause is understood by some to mean that they shall be reverently silent *before him*, by others that they shall be dumb with wonder *on account of him*, by others that they shall be silent *respecting him*, i. e. no

longer utter expressions of aversion or contempt. The reason of this voluntary humiliation is expressed in the last clause, viz. because they see things of which they had never had experience or even knowledge by report. This expression shows that *many nations* must be taken in its natural and proper sense, as denoting the gentiles. It is accordingly applied by Paul (Rom. 15:21) to the preaching of the gospel among those who had never before heard it. Interpreters have needlessly refined in interpreting the verb *see* as signifying mental no less than bodily perception. The truth is that the language is not scientific but poetical; the writer does not put sight for experience, but on the contrary describes experience as simple vision. For the stopping of the mouth, as an expression of astonishment or reverence, see Job 29:9. 40:4. Ps. 107:42. Ezek. 16:63. Mic. 7:16.

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## CHAPTER LIII.

NOTWITHSTANDING these and other prophecies of the Messiah, he is not recognized when he appears, v. 1. He is not the object of desire and trust for whom the great mass of the people have been waiting, v. 2. Nay, his low condition, and especially his sufferings, make him rather an object of contempt, v. 3. But this humiliation and these sufferings are vicarious, not accidental or incurred by his own fault, vs. 4-6. Hence, though personally innocent, he is perfectly unresisting, v. 7. Even they for whom he suffers may mistake his person and his office, v. 8. His case presents the two extremes of righteous punishment and perfect innocence, v. 9. But the glorious fruit of these very sufferings will correct all errors, v. 10. He becomes a Saviour only by becoming a substitute, v. 11. Even after the

work of expiation is completed and his glorious reward secured, the work of intercession will be still continued, v. 12.

1. *Who hath believed our report? and the arm of Jehovah, to whom (or upon whom) has it been revealed?* שְׂמוּעָה is properly the passive participle of the verb to hear, the feminine being used like the neuter in Greek and Latin to denote what is heard, and may therefore be applied to rumour, to instruction, or to speech in general. (See ch. 28:9, 19. Jer. 49:14, and compare the Greek ἀκοή, Rom. 10:16. Gal. 3:2. 1 Thess 2:13.) The restricted application of the term to the news of the deliverance from Babylon is quite gratuitous. Some understand the whole phrase passively, as meaning 'that which we have heard;' others understand it actively, as meaning that which we have published in the hearing of others; which agrees well with the context and with Paul's quotation (Rom. 10:16), and is perfectly consistent with the strict sense of the Hebrew words, though not sustained by any definite usage. That the words might have either of these senses in different connections, may be gathered from the fact, that in 2 Sam. 4:4, the qualifying noun denotes neither the author nor the recipient of the declaration, but its subject, so that in itself the phrase is quite indefinite. The implied negation is not absolute, but simply expressive of wonder at the paucity of true believers in the world at large, but more especially among the Jews, to whom some understand the passage as specifically referring, because it had already been predicted, in the foregoing verse, that the heathen would believe. There is no inconsistency, however, even if we take the words before us in their widest sense; because, as Calvin has observed, the Prophet interrupts his prediction of success and triumph to bewail the discouragements and disappointments which should intervene. The same thing had already been predicted indirectly in ch. 42:24, and similar objections to his own assurances occur



in ch. 49 : 14, 24. The two clauses are parallel expressions of the same idea ; to believe what God said, and to see his arm revealed, being identical. The advent of Christ, his miracles, his resurrection, his accession, are among the clearest proofs of the divine omnipotence and of its real exercise, a skeptical misgiving as to which is involved in a refusal to believe. The *arm* as the seat of active strength is often put for strength itself (2 Chr. 32 : 8. Jer. 17 : 5), and especially for the power of Jehovah (ch. 59 : 16. Deut. 4 : 34. 5 : 15. 26 : 8). The manifestation of God's justice is commonly described by Isaiah as including at the same time the deliverance of his friends and the destruction of his enemies. (See above, ch. 51 : 5.)

2. *And he came up like the tender plant before him, and like the root from a dry ground ; he had no form nor comeliness, and (when) we shall see him, no sight (or appearance) that we should desire it.* Most of the modern writers make all that follows the first verse the language of the people acknowledging their own incredulity with respect to the Messiah, and assigning as its cause their carnal expectations of a temporal prince, and their ignorance of the very end for which he came. The common version *he shall grow up* is ungrammatical and gratuitously violates the uniformity of the description, which presents the humiliation of Messiah as already past. *Out of a dry ground* implies a feeble sickly growth, and as its consequence a mean appearance. *Out of a dry ground* and the parallel expression (*before him*) may be considered as qualifying both the nouns, and separated only for the sake of the rhythmical arrangement of the sentence. *He had not*, literally, there was not to him, the only form in which that idea can be expressed in Hebrew. *Form* is here put for beautiful or handsome form ; as in 1 Sam. 16 : 18, David is called a *man of form*, i. e. a comely person. The two nouns here used are combined in literal description elsewhere (e. g. Gen. 29 : 17. 1 Sam. 25 : 3), and in this very passage (see

above, ch. 52 : 14). They denote in this case, not mere personal appearance, but the whole state of humiliation. In what sense the prophets thus grew up like suckers from a dry soil, or the Jewish nation while in exile, or the pious portion of them, or the younger race, it is as difficult to understand, or even to conceive, as it is easy to recognize this trait of the prophetic picture in the humiliation of our Saviour, and the general contempt to which it exposed him.

3. *Despised and forsaken of men (or ceasing from among men), a man of sorrows and acquainted with sickness, and like one hiding the face from him (or us), despised, and we esteemed him not.* From the general description of his humiliation, the Prophet now passes to a more particular account of his sufferings. The phrase *man of sorrows* seems to mean one whose afflictions are his chief characteristic, perhaps with an allusion to their number in the plural form. *Like one hiding his face from us*, or like a hiding of the face from us, i. e. as if he hid his face from us in shame and sorrow. Here again the reader is invited to compare the forced application of this verse to the Prophets, to all Israel, to the pious Jews, or to the younger race of exiles, with the old interpretation of it as a prophecy of Christ's humiliation.

4. *Surely our sicknesses he bore, and our griefs he carried; and we thought him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.* The metaphor is that of a burden, and the meaning of the whole verse, that they had misunderstood the very end for which Messiah was to come. *Sickness*, as in the verse preceding, is a representative expression for all suffering. *Our griefs*, those which we must otherwise have suffered, and that justly. Henderson makes his English version more expressive of the writer's main drift by employing the idiomatic form, *it was our griefs he bore it was our sorrows he carried*. The explanation of נָסַח as mean-

ing merely *took away*, is contradicted by the context and especially by the parallel phrase, which can only mean *he bore or carried them*. It is alleged indeed that one is never said to bear the sins of another, and some go so far as to explain these words as meaning that he bore with them patiently, while others understand the sense to be that he shared in the sufferings of others. The terms are evidently drawn from the Mosaic law of sacrifice, a prominent feature in which is the substitution of the victim for the actual offender, so that the former *bears* the sins of the latter, and the latter, in default of such an expiation, is said to bear his own sin. (See Lev. 5 : 1, 17. 17 : 16. 24 : 15. Num. 9 : 13. 14 : 33. Ex. 23 : 38. Lev. 10 : 17. 16 : 22.) For the use of the parallel term in the same vicarious sense, see Lam. 5 : 7. (Compare Ez. 18 : 19.) The application of these words by Matthew (8 : 17) to the removal of bodily diseases cannot involve a denial of the doctrine of vicarious atonement, which is clearly recognized in Matt. 20 : 28 ; nor is it an exposition of the passage quoted in its full sense, but, as Calvin well explains it, an intimation that the prediction had begun to be fulfilled, because already its effects were visible, the Scriptures always representing sorrow as the fruit of sin. *Stricken*, as in some other cases, has the pregnant sense of *stricken from above*, or *smitten of God*, as it is fully expressed in the next clause. (See Gen. 12 : 17. 2 Kings 15 : 5. 1 Sam 6 : 9.) The verb translated *afflicted* was particularly applied to the infliction of disease (Num. 14 : 12. Deut. 28 : 22), especially the leprosy. Hence the old Jewish notion that the Messiah was to be a leper.

5. *And he was pierced (or wounded) for our transgressions, bruised (or crushed) for our iniquities ; the chastisement (or punishment) of our peace (was) upon him, and by his stripes we were healed.* There may be a secondary and implicit reference to the crucifixion, such as we have met with repeatedly before in

cases where the direct and proper meaning of the words was more extensive. The chastisement of peace is not only that which tends to peace, but that by which peace is procured directly. It is not merely a chastisement morally salutary for us, nor one which merely contributes to our safety, but, according to the parallelism, one which has accomplished our salvation, and in this way, that it was inflicted not on us but on him, so that we came off safe and uninjured. The application of the phrase to Christ, without express quotation, is of frequent occurrence in the New Testament. (See Eph. 2 : 14-17. Col. 1 : 20, 21. Heb. 13 : 20, and compare Isaiah 9 : 6. Mic. 6 : 5. Zech. 1 : 13.) The word translated *stripes* is properly a singular, denoting the tumour raised by scourging, here put collectively for stripes, and that for suffering in general, but probably with secondary reference to the literal infliction of this punishment upon the Saviour. *We were healed*, literally, *it was healed to us*. *It was healed* is a general proposition ; *with respect to us* is the specific limitation. Healing is a natural and common figure for relief from suffering considered as a wound or malady. (Compare ch. 6 : 10. 19 : 22, 30 : 26. Jer. 8 : 22, 17. 2 Chron. 7 : 14.) The preterite is not used merely to signify the certainty of the event, but because this effect is considered as inseparable from the procuring cause which had been just before described in the historical or narrative form as an event already past : when he was smitten we were thereby healed. It is therefore injurious to the strength as well as to the beauty of the sentence to translate it, *that by his stripes we might be healed*. The mere contingency thus stated is immeasurably less than the positive assertion that *by his stripes we were healed*. The same objection, in a less degree, applies to the common version, *we are healed*, which makes the statement too indefinite, and robs it of its peculiar historical form.

6. *All we like sheep had gone astray, each to his own way we*

*had turned, and Jehovah laid on him the iniquity of us all.* This verse describes the occasion or rather the necessity of the sufferings mentioned in those before it. It was because men were wholly estranged from God, and an atonement was required for their reconciliation. *All we* does not mean all the Jews or all the heathen, but all men without exception. The common version, *have gone astray, have turned*, does not express the historical form of the original sufficiently, but rather means we have done so up to the present time, whereas the prominent idea in the Prophet's mind is that we had done so before Messiah suffered. The figure of wandering or lost sheep is common in Scripture to denote alienation from God and the misery which is its necessary consequence. (See Ezek. 34 : 5. Matt. 9 : 36.) The entire comparison is probably that of sheep without a shepherd (1 Kings 22 : 17. Zech. 10 : 2). The original expression is like *the* sheep (or collectively the flock) i. e. not sheep in general but the sheep that wander or have no shepherd. The idea of a shepherd, although not expressed, appears to have been present to the writer's mind, not only in the first clause but the last, where the image meant to be presented is no doubt that of a shepherd laying down his life for the sheep. This may be fairly inferred not merely from the want of connection which would otherwise exist between the clauses, and which can only be supplied in this way, nor even from the striking analogy of Zech. 13 : 7 where the figure is again used, but chiefly from the application of the metaphor in the New Testament, with obvious though tacit reference to this part of Isaiah, to Christ's laying down his life for his people. (See John 10 : 11-18 and 1 Peter 2 : 24, 25.) The meaning given to the last verb in the margin of the English Bible (*made to meet*) is not sustained by etymology or usage, as the primitive verb does not mean simply to come together, but always denotes some degree of violent collision, either physical, as when one body lights or strikes upon an-

other, or moral, as when one person falls upon i. e. attacks another. The secondary senses of the verb are doubtful and of rare occurrence. (See above, on ch. 47 : 3, and below on ch. 64 : 4) The common version (*laid upon him*) is objectionable only because it is too weak, and suggests the idea of a mild and inoffensive gesture, whereas that conveyed by the Hebrew word is necessarily a violent one, viz. that of causing to strike or fall. If vicarious suffering can be described in words, it is so described in these two verses. Compare Rom. 4 : 25. 2 Cor. 5 : 21. 1 Pet. 2 : 22-25.

7. *He was oppressed and he humbled himself, and he will not open his mouth—as a lamb to the slaughter is brought, and as a sheep before its shearers is dumb—and he will not open his mouth.* Having explained the occasion of Messiah's sufferings, the Prophet now describes his patient endurance of them. The second verb has been usually understood as a simple repetition of the same idea in other words. Thus the English Version renders it, *he was oppressed and he was afflicted*. Besides the tautology of this translation which would prove nothing by itself, it fails to represent the form of the original, in which the pronoun is introduced before the second verb, and according to usage must be regarded as emphatic. By far the simplest and most natural construction is to give it its ordinary sense as a conjunction and emphatic pronoun, *he was oppressed and he himself submitted to affliction*, or allowed himself to be afflicted. There is then no tautology nor any arbitrary difference of tense assumed between the two verbs, while the whole sense is good in itself and in perfect agreement with the context. All interpreters render *יָפַח* as a preterite or a present, which is no doubt substantially correct, as the whole passage is descriptive. It seems desirable, however, to retain, as far as possible, the characteristic form of the original, especially as it is very hard to account for the repeated use of the future



here, if nothing more was intended than might have been expressed by the preterite. At all events, the strict translation of the form should be retained, if it can be done without injury to the sense, which is certainly the case here, as we have only to suppose that the writer suddenly but naturally changes his position from that of historical retrospection to that of actual participation in the passing scene, and, as if he saw the victim led to the slaughter, says, 'he will not open his mouth.' Besides those places where Christ is called the Lamb of God (e. g. John 1 : 29. 1 Peter 1 : 18, 19. Acts 8 : 32, 35), there seems to be reference to this description of his meek endurance in 1 Peter 2 : 23.

8. *From distress and from judgment he was taken ; and in his generation who will think, that he was cut off from the land of the living, for the transgression of my people, (as) a curse for them ?* Every clause of this verse has been made the subject of dispute among interpreters ; but the general meaning is most probably the one expressed in the above translation.

9. *And he gave with wicked (men) his grave, and with a rich (man) in his death ; because (or although) he had done no violence, and no deceit (was) in his mouth.* They appointed him his grave with the wicked, but in his death he really reposed with a rich man, viz. Joseph of Arimathea, who is expressly so called, Matt. 27 : 57. Malefactors were either left unburied or disgraced by a promiscuous interment in an unclean place. As the Messiah was to die like a criminal, he might have expected to be buried like one ; and his exemption from this posthumous dishonour was occasioned by a special providential interference.

10. *And Jehovah was pleased to crush (or bruise) him, he put him to grief (or made him sick) ; if (or when) his soul shall make*

*an offering for sin, he shall see (his) seed, he shall prolong (his) days, and the pleasure of Jehovah in his hand shall prosper.* Here begins the account of the Messiah's exaltation. All the previous sufferings were to have an end in the erection of God's kingdom upon earth. As the first clause is in contrast with the last of v. 9, it may be read, *and (yet) Jehovah was pleased*, i. e. notwithstanding the Messiah's perfect innocence. The sense is not, that *Jehovah was pleased with his being crushed*, which might imply that he was crushed by another, but that Jehovah was pleased himself to crush or bruise him, since the verb is not a passive but an active one. In the text of the English Version we find *when thou shalt make etc.*; but as Jehovah is nowhere else directly addressed in this whole context, the construction in the margin (*when his soul shall make*) is the one now commonly adopted. The word *soul* may be explained as referring the oblation to the life itself, which was really the thing offered; just as the blood of Christ is said to cleanse from all sin (1 John 1. 7), meaning that Christ cleanses by his blood, i. e. his expiatory death. As the terms used to describe the atonement are borrowed from the ceremonial institutions of the old economy, so those employed in describing the reward of the Messiah's sufferings are also drawn from theocratical associations. Hence the promise of long life and a numerous offspring, which of course are applicable only in a figurative spiritual sense. The seed here mentioned is identical with the *mighty*, whom he is described as sprinkling in ch. 52 : 15, and as spoiling in v. 13 below, whom he is represented in v. 11 as justifying, in v. 5 as representing, in v. 12 as interceding for. They are called his seed, as they are elsewhere called the sons of God (Gen. 6 : 2), as the disciples of the prophets were called their sons (1 Kings 2 : 25), and as Christians are to this day in the east called the offspring or family of the Messiah.

11. *From (or of) the labour of his soul (or life) he shall see, he shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my servant (as) a righteous one justify (or give righteousness to) many, and their iniquities he shall bear.* In this verse Jehovah is again directly introduced as speaking. The first word is explained by some as a particle of time, *after the labour of his soul*; by others as implying freedom or deliverance. Most interpreters follow the Vulgate in making it denote the efficient or procuring cause, *pro eo quod laboravit anima ejus*. The English Version makes it partitive; but this detracts from the force of the expression, and implies that he should only see a portion of the fruit of his labours. *Satisfied*, not in the sense of being contented, but in that of being filled or abundantly supplied, applied to spiritual no less than to temporal enjoyments. (Ps. 17 : 15. 123 : 3. Jer. 31 : 14.) Some interpreters regard this as a case of hendiadys, in which the one word simply qualifies the other: he shall see, he shall be satisfied, i. e. he shall abundantly see or see to his heart's content. The only satisfactory construction of *his knowledge* is the passive one which makes the phrase mean *by the knowledge of him* upon the part of others; and this is determined by the whole connection to mean practical experimental knowledge, involving faith and a self-appropriation of the Messiah's righteousness, the effect of which is then expressed in the following words. That justification in the strict forensic sense is meant, may be argued from the entire context, in which the Messiah appears, not as a Prophet or a Teacher, but a Priest and a Sacrifice, and also from the parallel expression in this very verse. In the next clause the common version (*my righteous servant*) is forbidden by the Hebrew collocation, which can only mean *the righteous one, my servant, or my servant (as) a righteous person*. All mistake and doubt as to the nature of the justification here intended, or of the healing mentioned in v. 6, or of the cleansing mentioned in ch. 52 : 15, is precluded by the addition of the words, *and he shall bear their iniquities*.

The introduction of the pronoun makes a virtual antithesis, suggesting the idea of exchange or mutual substitution. *They* shall receive his righteousness, and *he* shall bear their burdens.

12. *Therefore will I divide to him among the many, and with the strong shall he divide the spoil, inasmuch as he bared unto death his soul, and with the transgressors was numbered, and he (himself) bare the sin of many, and for the transgressors he shall make intercession.* The simple meaning of the first clause is that he shall be triumphant; not that others shall be sharers in his victory, but that he shall be as gloriously successful in his enterprise as other victors ever were in theirs. The Jewish objection, that Christ never waged war or divided spoil, has been eagerly caught up and repeated by the rationalistic school of critics. But spiritual triumphs must be here intended, because no others could be represented as the fruit of voluntary humiliation and vicarious suffering, and because the same thing is described in the context as a sprinkling of the nations, as a bearing of their guilt, and as their justification. The *many* and the *strong* of this verse are the nations and the kings of ch. 52 : 15, the spiritual seed of v. 8 and 10 above. (Compare ch. 11 : 10 and Ps. 2 : 8.) The last clause recapitulates the claims of the Messiah to this glorious reward. The application of this clause to our Saviour's crucifixion between thieves (Mark 15 : 28) does not exhaust the whole sense of the prophecy. It rather points out one of those remarkable coincidences which were brought about by Providence between the prophecies and the circumstances of our Saviour's passion. *Intercession*, not in the restricted sense of prayer for others, but in the wider one of meritorious and prevailing intervention, which is ascribed to Christ in the New Testament, not as a work already finished, like that of atonement, but as one still going on (Rom. 8 : 34. Heb. 9 : 24 1 John 2 : 1), for which cause the Prophet here employs the fu

ture form. The phrase translated *inasmuch as* does not simply mean *because*, but *instead, or in lieu (of this) that*, which expresses more distinctly the idea of reward or compensation. The most specious objection to the old interpretation of this verse, as teaching the doctrine of vicarious atonement, is that נָשָׂא, when directly followed by a noun denoting sin, invariably means to *forgive* or *pardon* it, except in Lev. 10 : 17, where it means to atone for it, but never to bear the sins of others, which can only be expressed by נָשָׂא נֶפֶשׁ, as in Ezek. 18 : 19, 20. (See Gen. 50 : 17. Ex. 10 : 17. 32 : 32. 34 : 7. Ps. 32 : 5. 85 : 2. Job 7 : 21.) It is no sufficient answer to this argument to say that the parallel expression determines the meaning of the phrase in question ; since all parallelisms are not synonymous, and no parallelism can prove anything in opposition to a settled usage. But although the parallel phrase cannot change or even ascertain the sense of this, it does itself undoubtedly express the idea which the objector seeks to banish from the text ; since no one can pretend to say that כָּפַר means to pardon, and it matters not on which side of the parallel the disputed doctrine is expressed, if it only be expressed at all. Little or nothing would be therefore gained by proving that נָשָׂא חַטָּאת only means to pardon. But this is very far from being proved by the usage of the Hebrew verb, which itself presupposes the doctrine, that the only way in which a holy God can take away sin is by bearing it ; in other words he can forgive it only by providing an atonement for it. This alone enables him to be supremely just and yet a justifier, not of the innocent, but of the guilty. Thus the usage so triumphantly adduced to disprove the doctrine of atonement, is found, on deeper and more thorough scrutiny, itself to presuppose that very doctrine.

## CHAPTER LIV.

INSTEAD of suffering from the loss of her national prerogatives; the church shall be more glorious and productive than before, v. 1. Instead of being limited to a single nation, she shall be so extended as to take in all the nations of the earth, vs. 2, 3. What seemed at first to be her forlorn and desolate condition, shall be followed by a glorious change, v. 4. He who seemed once to be the God of the Jews only, shall now be seen to be the God of the Gentiles also, v. 5. The abrogation of the old economy was like the repudiation of a wife, but its effects will show it to be rather a renewal of the conjugal relation, v. 6. The momentary rejection shall be followed by an everlasting reconciliation, vs. 7, 8. The old economy, like Noah's flood, can never be repeated or renewed, v. 9. That was a temporary institution; this shall outlast the earth itself, v. 10. The old Jerusalem shall be forgotten in the splendour of the new, vs. 11, 12. But this shall be a spiritual splendour springing from a constant divine influence, v. 13. Hence it shall also be a holy and a safe state, v. 14. All the enemies of the Church shall either be destroyed or received into her bosom, v. 15. The warrior and his weapons are alike God's creatures and at his disposal, v. 16. In every contest, both of hand and tongue, the Church shall be triumphant, not in her own right or her own strength, but in that of Him who justifies, protects, and saves her, v. 17.

1. *Shout, oh barren, that did not bear, break forth into a shout and cry aloud, she that did not writhe (in childbirth); for more (are) the children of the desolate than the children of the married (woman), saith Jehovah.* According to some writers, the object of address is the city of Jerusalem, in which no citizens were



born during the exile, but which was afterwards to be more populous than the other cities of Judah which had not been reduced to such a state of desolation. Besides other difficulties which attend this explanation, it will be sufficient to observe that those who apply the first verse to the city of Jerusalem are under the necessity of afterwards assuming that this object is exchanged for another, viz. the people, a conclusive reason for regarding this as the original object of address, especially as we have had abundant proof already that the Zion or Jerusalem of these later prophecies is only a symbol of the church or nation. In the first clause our idiom would require *didst not bear* and *didst not writhe*; but Hebrew usage admits of the third person. Another Hebrew idiom is the expression of the same idea first in a positive and then in a negative form, *barren that did not bear*. This very combination occurs more than once elsewhere. (Judges 13:2. Job 24:21.) The contrast here presented occurs also in 1 Sam. 2:5.

2. *Widen the place of thy tent, and the curtains of thy dwellings let them stretch out; spare not (or hinder it not); lengthen thy cords and strengthen (or make fast) thy stakes.* As in the parallel passage (ch. 49:19, 20), the promise of increase is now expressed by the figure of enlarged accommodations. The *place* may be either the area within the tent or the spot on which it is erected. The *curtains* are the tent-cloths stretched upon the poles to form the dwelling. The *stakes* are the tent-pins, to which the tent-cloths are attached by cords. The last clause may either mean, take stronger pins, or fix them more firmly in the ground; both implying an enlargement of the tent and a consequently greater stress upon the cords and stakes.

3. *For right and left shall thou break forth (or spread), and thy seed shall possess (or dispossess or inherit) nations, and re-people*

*ruined (or forsaken) cities.* *Right and left* are indefinite expressions meaning on both sides or in all directions. The figurative meaning of the terms, as in many other cases, is evinced by an immediate change of figure, without any regard to mere rhetorical consistency. The same thing which is first represented as the violent expulsion of an enemy from his dominions, is immediately afterwards described as the restoration of deserted places. The whole verse is a beautiful description of the wonderful extension of the church and her spiritual conquest of the nations.

4. *Fear not, for thou shalt not be ashamed, and be not abashed, for thou shalt not blush; for the shame of thy youth thou shalt forget, and the reproach of thy widowhood thou shalt not remember any more.* Here, as in many other cases, shame includes the disappointment of the hopes, but with specific reference to previous misconduct. (See Job 6 : 20.) The first clause declares that she has no cause for despondency, the second disposes of the causes which might seem to be suggested by her history. The essential meaning of the last clause is, thy former experience of my displeasure. The figurative form of the expression is accommodated to the chosen metaphor of a wife forsaken and restored to her husband. The specific reference of *youth* to the Egyptian bondage, and of *widowhood* to the Babylonian exile, is artificial and forbidden by the context.

5. *For thy husband (is) thy Maker, Jehovah of Hosts (is) his name; and thy Redeemer (is) the Holy One of Israel, the God of all the earth shall he be called.* This verse is marked by a peculiar regularity of structure, the two members of the first clause corresponding exactly to the similar members of the other. In each clause the first member points out the relation of Jehovah to his people, while the second proclaims one of his descriptive names. He is related to the church as her *Husband* and *Re-*

deemer ; he is known or shall be known to all mankind as the *Lord of Hosts* and as the *God of the whole earth*, which are not to be regarded as equivalent expressions. As the *Goel* of the Jewish institutions, the redeemer of a forfeited inheritance, was necessarily the next of kin, it is appropriately placed in opposition to the endearing name of husband ; and as the title *Lord of Hosts* imports a universal sovereignty, it is no less exactly matched with the *God of the whole earth*. But this last phrase expresses the idea of universal recognition. *Shall he be called*, i. e. he shall be recognized hereafter in the character which even now belongs to him.

6. *For as a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit has Jehovah called thee, and (as) a wife of youth ; for she shall be rejected, said thy God.* Reduced to a prosaic form and order, this verse seems to mean, that Jehovah had espoused her in her youth, then cast her off for her iniquities, and now at last recalled her from her solitude and grief to be his wife again. (Compare Hosea 2 : 4, 7, 14, 16, 19.) *A wife of youth*, not merely a young wife, but one married early. (See Proverbs 5 : 18, and Malachi 2 : 14.) The sense is not that she had been wedded to Jehovah in her youth and now recalled, but that he now recalled her as a husband might recall the long rejected wife of his youth. The common version of the last clause, *when thou wast refused*, is ungrammatical. The last clause is an explanation of the first, in which she is said to have been recalled as a forsaken wife, and that a wife of youth, because her God had said to her at that time, thou shalt be rejected. This explanation, while it simplifies the syntax, leaves the meaning of the verse unaltered.

7. *In a little moment I forsook thee, and in great mercies I will gather thee.* The metaphor is here carried out in the form of an affectionate assurance that the love now restored shall experience no further interruption. The use of the preterite and

future implies an intermediate point of view between the opposite treatments here described. I did forsake thee, and now I am about to gather thee. If any specific application of the words be made, it must be to the momentary casting off of Israel which seemed to accompany the change of dispensations. The confusion of the metaphors in this whole passage springs from the complexity of the relations which they represent. As a nation, Israel was in fact cast off; as a church, it never could be.

8. *In a gush of wrath I hid my face a moment from thee, and in everlasting kindness I have had mercy on thee, saith thy Redeemer, Jehovah.* The idea of the preceding verse is again expressed more fully. The first noun occurs only here, but a cognate form means a flood or inundation, and is elsewhere used in reference to anger. So in ch. 42:25, the wrath of God is said to have been *poured out* upon Israel. This verse, like the one before it, is a general description of the everlasting favour which shall drown the very memory of former alienations between God and his people. The only specific application which is equally consistent with the form of the expression and the context is the one suggested in the note upon the foregoing verse.

9. *For the waters of Noah is this to me; what I swear from the waters of Noah passing again over the earth (i. e. against their passing, or, that they should not pass), so I have sworn from being angry (that I will not be angry) against thee, and from rebuking (that I will not rebuke) thee.* The assurance of the preceding verse is now repeated in another form. There can no more be another such effusion of my wrath than there can be another deluge here called the *waters of Noah*, just as we familiarly say "Noah's flood." The security in this case, as in that, is a divine oath or solemn covenant like that recorded

Gen. 8 : 21, and 9 : 11. Some convert a simile into a symbol, and endeavour to enumerate the points of similarity between the world and the deluge, the church and the ark. It is only upon this erroneous supposition that such passages as Ps. 124 : 4, 5, can be regarded as illustrative parallels. Such minute coincidences any reader is at liberty to search out for himself; but the text mentions only one point of comparison between the two events, namely, that neither can occur again. The Prophet does not say that God's displeasure with the church is a flood which shall never be repeated, but that it shall never be repeated any more than the flood. There is no need of supplying any preposition before *waters*, since the meaning is that this is the same thing as the flood, or just such another case; in what respect is afterwards explained. *To me* does not simply mean in my view or opinion, but expresses similarity of obligation; the oath was as binding in the one case as the other. *Rebuke* must here be taken in the strong and pregnant sense which it has in ch. 17 : 13. 50 : 2. 51 : 20, and very generally throughout the Old Testament, as signifying not a merely verbal but a practical rebuke. That this is not a general promise of security, is plain from the fact that the church has always been subjected to vicissitudes and fluctuations. Nor is there any period in her history to which it can be properly applied in a specific sense, except the change of dispensations, which was made once for all and can never be repeated. That the church shall never be again brought under the restrictive institutions of the ceremonial law, is neither a matter of course nor a matter of indifference, but a glorious promise altogether worthy of the solemn oath by which it is attested here.

10. *For the mountains shall move and the hills shall shake; but my favour from thee shall not move, and my covenant of peace shall not shake, saith thy pitier, Jehovah.* The meaning is not that God's promise is as stable as the mountains, but that it is more

so; they shall be removed, but it shall stand forever. The mountains and hills in this place are not symbols of states and empires, but natural emblems of stability. (See Deut. 33: 15. Ps. 65: 6. 125: 1, 2.) The phrase *covenant of peace* denotes a divine promise or engagement, securing the enjoyment of peace, both in the strict sense and in the wide one of prosperity or happiness. (Compare v. 13. ch. 53: 5. Ezek. 34: 25. 37: 26.) *The covenant of my peace* does not give the sense so fully as *my covenant of peace*, i. e. my peace-giving covenant. The force of the last phrase is impaired by the circumlocution of the common version, *the Lord that hath mercy on thee*; still more by Lowth's diluted paraphrase, *Jehovah who beareth toward thee the most tender affection*.

11. *Wretched, storm-tossed, comfortless! Behold I am laying (or about to lay) thy stones in antimony, and I will found thee upon sapphires.* The past afflictions of God's people are contrasted with the glory which awaits them, and which is here represented by the image of a city built of precious stones, and cemented with the substance used by oriental women in the staining of their eyelids. (2 Kings 9: 30. Jer. 4: 30.) This eye-paint, made of stibium or antimony, may be joined with sapphires as a costly substance, commonly applied to a more delicate use; or there may be allusion to the likeness between stones thus set and painted eyes. The stones meant are not corner or foundation-stones, but all those used in building. There is something singular, though not perhaps significant, in the application to these stones of a Hebrew verb elsewhere used only in reference to animals.

12. *And I will make thy battlements (or pinnacles) ruby, and thy gates to (be) sparkling gems, and all thy border to (be) stones of pleasure (or delight).* The splendid image of the preceding verse is here continued and completed. The precise kinds of



gems here meant are not of much importance. The essential idea, as appears from the etymology of the names, is that of sparkling brilliancy. The last phrase is a more generic term, including all the others, and equivalent to our expression, precious stones. Some put a specific sense on every part of the description, understanding by the antimony of the preceding verse the doctrine of Christ's blood, by the gates the synods of the church, by the battlements its advocates and champions, etc. Lowth, with better taste and judgment, says that "these seem to be general images to express beauty, magnificence, purity, strength, and solidity, agreeably to the ideas of the eastern nations, and to have never been intended to be strictly scrutinized, or minutely and particularly explained, as if they had each of them some precise moral or spiritual meaning."

13. *And all thy children disciples of Jehovah, and great (or plentiful) the peace of thy sons (or children).* Some make the sentence simply descriptive, by supplying *are* in the present tense. Others supply *shall be*, and thus make it a prediction or a promise. The common version, *taught of God*, which Lowth changes into *taught by God*, though not erroneous, is inadequate; since the Hebrew word is not a participle but a noun, used elsewhere to denote a pupil, follower, or disciple. (See ch. 8 : 16.) The promise is not one of occasional instruction, but of permanent connection with Jehovah, as his followers and partakers of his constant teaching. That the words are applicable to the highest teaching of which any rational being is susceptible, to wit, that of the Holy Spirit making known the Father and the Son, we have our Saviour's own authority for stating. (See John 6 : 45. and compare Matt. 23 : 8. Heb. 8 : 11. 1 John 2 : 27.) Paul too describes believers as *θεοδιδυκτοι* in relation to the duties of their calling (1 Thess. 4 : 9.) Similar promises under the Old Testament are given in Jer 31 : 34 and elsewhere. As in ch. 43 : 9 all the gifts

of the Spirit are included. The consequence of this blessed privilege is peace, no doubt in the widest sense of spiritual welfare and prosperity. (John 14 : 27. Phil. 4 : 7.)

14. *In righteousness shalt thou be established : be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear, and from destruction, for it shall not come near to thee.* An additional promise of complete security, made more emphatic by its repetition in a variety of forms. By *righteousness*, some understand the righteousness or faithfulness of God, securing the performance of his promises ; others, the justice of the government itself, or the practice of righteousness among the people. The first, however, comprehends the others as its necessary consequences, public and private virtue being always represented in Scripture as the fruit of divine influence. (Compare ch. 1 : 27. 9 : 6. 11 : 5. 16 : 5.) Of the next clause there are several interpretations. The ancient versions understand it as a warning or dissuasion from the practice of oppression. But this does not agree with the context, which is evidently meant to be consolatory and encouraging. The explanation which has been most generally acquiesced in, is the one which supposes the imperative to represent the future, or a promise to be clothed in the form of a command : ‘Be far from oppression. i. e. thou shalt be far from it.’ Examples of this idiom are supposed to occur in Gen. 42 : 18. Deut. 32 : 50. Prov. 20 : 13. *Be far from oppression* is not a promise of exemption from it, for that follows in the next clause, which the modern interpreters correctly understand as meaning, thou hast no cause to fear. Be far from oppression, i. e. far from apprehending it. The whole may then be paraphrased as follows : ‘When once established by the exercise of righteousness on my part and your own, you may put far off all dread of oppression. for you have no cause to fear it, and of destruction, for it shall not come nigh you.’ With the promise of this clause, compare ch. 32 : 16 and 62 :

12. The truth of the promise, in its true sense, is vindicated by the fact that it relates to the course of the new dispensation as a whole, with special reference to its final consummation

15. *Lo, they shall gather, they shall gather, not at my sign (or signal). Who has gathered against thee! He shall fall away to thee.* The promise of the preceding verse is here so modified as to provide for every possible contingency. If enemies should be assembled, it will not be by divine command (compare ch. 10 : 5. 47 : 6), and they shall end by coming over to the side of those whom they assail. This, on the whole, appears to be the meaning, although every expression has received a different explanation. The promise is not that they should never be assailed, but that they should never be conquered. *Not by my sign or signal*, i. e. not by my authority or not at my command.

16. *Lo, I have created the smith, blowing into the fire of coal, and bringing out a weapon for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy.* The general meaning evidently is, that God can certainly redeem his pledge, because all instruments and agents are alike at his disposal and under his control. He is not only the maker of the weapons of war, but the maker of their maker, as well as of the warrior who wields them. The pronoun in both clauses is emphatic. It is I (and not another) who created them. A similar glimpse into the ancient forge or smithy has already been afforded in the scornful attack upon the worshippers of idols, ch 41 : 7. *Bringing out* does not mean bringing out of his workshop or his hands, but bringing into shape or into being, precisely as we say bringing forth, producing, although commonly in reference to animal or vegetable life. Perhaps, however, it would be still better to explain it as meaning out of the fire, in which case there would be a fine antithesis between blowing into it and bringing the

wrought iron out of it. 'It is I that create the smith who makes the instruments, and it is also I that create the destroyer who employs them.'

17. *Every weapon (that) shall be formed against thee shall not prosper, and every tongue (that) shall rise with thee in judgment thou shalt condemn.* *This is the heritage of the servants of Jehovah, and their righteousness from me, saith Jehovah.* The common version of the first clause expresses the same thought in the English idiom, *no weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper*, a form of speech which does not exist in Hebrew, and can only be supplied by combining negative and universal terms. The expression, though ambiguous, is determined by the context. It cannot mean that only some of the weapons formed should take effect—which might be the meaning of the phrase in English—because in the affirmative clause which follows, and which must be co-extensive in its meaning, there is no such ambiguity, it being said expressly that every tongue shall be condemned. Another difference of idiom here exemplified has reference to the ellipsis of the relative pronoun, which in English is familiarly omitted when the object of the verb, but never when its subject. *Every weapon they form* would be perfectly intelligible; but *every weapon is formed* (for *which is formed*) would convey a wrong idea. *Shall not prosper*, i. e. shall not take effect or accomplish its design. To rise or stand in judgment, literally *for* or *with respect to judgment*, is to appear before a judgment-seat, to invoke the decision of a judge. *With thee* may either denote simply simultaneous action, that of standing up together, or it may have the stronger sense *against thee*, as it seems to have above in v. 15, and as it has in our expressions to *fight with* or to *go to law with*. The tongue is here personified, or used to represent the party litigant whose only weapon is his speech. For the judicial or forensic usage of the verb, see above, on ch. 50 : 9. Some sup-

pose these two clauses to reduce all opposition and hostility to that of word and that of deed ; but there may also be allusion to the obvious distinction between warfare in its military and its civil forms, or between what is properly called war and litigation. In all these varied forms of strife it is predicted that the church shall be victorious. (Compare Rom. 8 : 37 and 2 Cor. 2 : 14.) And this security is represented as her heritage or lawful possession and as her right, i. e. what is due to her from God, as the judge of the whole earth, who must do right.

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## CHAPTER LV.

By the removal of the old restrictions, the church is, for the first time, open to the whole world, as a source or medium of the richest spiritual blessings, v. 1. It is only here that real nourishment can be obtained, v. 2. Life is made sure by an oath and covenant, v. 3. The Messiah is a witness of the truth and a commander of the nations, v. 4. As such he will be recognized by many nations who before knew nothing of the true religion, v. 5. These are now addressed directly, and exhorted to embrace the offered opportunity, v. 6. To this there is every encouragement afforded in the divine mercy, v. 7. The infinite disparity between God and man should have the same effect, instead of hindering it, vs. 8, 9. The commands and promises of God must be fulfilled, vs. 10, 11. Nothing therefore can prevent a glorious change in the condition of the world under the dispensation of the Spirit, v. 12. This blessed renovation, being directly promotive of God's glory, shall endure forever, v. 13.

1. *Ho every thirsty one, come ye to the waters ; and he to whom there is no money, come ye, buy (food) and eat ; and come, buy, without money and without price, wine and milk.* The promises contained in the preceding chapters to the church, are now followed by a general invitation to partake of the blessings thus secured. Water, milk, and wine, are here combined to express the ideas of refreshment, nourishment, and exhilaration. Under these figures are included all things essential to the spiritual life. The benefits here offered must of course bear some proportion to the means by which they were secured, viz. the atoning death of the Messiah and the influences of his Spirit. The reference to the water of baptism, which some of the Fathers found in this verse, is excluded by the fact that the water here meant is not water for washing but water to be drunk. *And he*, after the universal expression *every one*, does not add a new idea, but explains the one expressed already, and is therefore equivalent to *even he* in English. The same remark applies to the *and* before the second *come*, which is not incorrectly rendered *yea come* in the common version. *To whom there is not money* is the only equivalent in Hebrew to our phrase *who has no money*. This apparent contradiction was intended by the writer to express in the strongest manner the gratuitous nature of the purchase. *Wine and milk* are combined, either as necessities or luxuries, by Jacob in Gen. 49 : 12. The images of this verse are essentially the same with those in ch. 12 : 3. 25 : 6. 62 : 8, 9. 65 : 13. John 4 : 14. 7 : 37. Rev. 22 : 17.

2. *Why will ye weigh money for (that which is) not bread, and your labour for (that which is) not to satisfy? Hearken, hearken unto me, and eat (that which is) good, and your soul shall enjoy itself in fatness.* The gratuitous blessings offered by Messiah are contrasted with the costly and unprofitable labours of mankind to gain the same end in another way. It was not



that they refused food, nor even that they were unwilling to buy it; but they mistook for it that which was not nourishing. In the first clause there is reference to the primitive custom of weighing instead of counting money, from which have arisen several of the most familiar denominations, such as the Hebrew *shekel*, the Greek *talent*, the French *livre*, and the English *pound*. The essential idea here is that of paying. Bread, as the staff of life, is here and in many other cases put for food in general. *Labour*, as in ch. 45 : 14, means the product or result of labour. The emphatic repetition of the verb *to hear* may be variously expressed in English as denoting to hear diligently, attentively, by all means, or to purpose; but the best translation, because it may be considered as including all the rest, is that which copies most exactly the peculiar form of the original. The soul is probably mentioned for the purpose of showing that the hunger and the food referred to are not bodily but spiritual. *Good* is emphatic, meaning that which is truly good, in opposition to the *no-bread* of the first clause, a peculiar compound phrase like those in ch. 10 : 15. 31 : 3. *Fat*, by a figure common in all languages, is put for *richness* both of food and soil. (See ch. 5 : 1. Ps. 36 : 8. 63 : 6. Job 36 : 16.)

3. *Incline your ear and come unto me, hear and your soul shall live (or let it live), and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, the sure mercies of David.* This is obviously a repetition of the same offer in another form; which shows that the two preceding verses cannot have respect to literal food or bodily subsistence. Here again the use of the word *soul* necessarily suggests the thought of spiritual life. Of the phrase *mercies of David*, which is also used by Solomon (2 Chr. 6 : 42), there are three interpretations. The first understands it to mean favours, like those which were enjoyed by David. The second regards David as a name of the Messiah, as in Ezek. 34 : 23,

24 The third explanation, and the one most commonly adopted, is, that the *mercies of David* means the mercies promised to him, with particular reference to 2 Sam. 7 : 8-16. (Compare 1 Chr. 17 : 11, 12 and Psalm 89 : 3, 4.) As the main theme of this promise was a perpetual succession on the throne of David, it was fulfilled in Christ, to whom it is applied in Acts 13 : 34. (Compare Is. 9 : 7 and Luke 1 : 32, 33.) That the promise to David was distinct from that respecting Solomon (1 Chr. 22 : 8-13), and had not reference to any immediate descendant, seems clear from 1 Chr. 17 : 12-14. Thus understood, the text contains a solemn assurance that the promise made to David should be faithfully performed in its original import and intent. Hence the mercies of David are called *sure*, i. e. sure to be accomplished; or it might be rendered *faithful*, credible, or trusted, without any material effect upon the meaning.

4. *Lo, (as) a witness of nations I have given him, a chief and commander of nations.* The emphasis appears to be on *nations*, which is therefore repeated without change of form. The essential meaning is the same as that of ch. 49 : 6, viz. that the Messiah was sent to be the Saviour not of the Jews only but also of the Gentiles. His relation to the latter is expressed by three terms. First, he is a witness, i. e. a witness to the truth (John 18 : 37) and a witness against sinners (Mal. 3 : 5). The same office is ascribed to Christ in Rev. 1 : 5. 3 : 14 (Compare 1 Tim. 6 : 13.) The application of this verse to the Messiah, therefore, is entirely natural. The second term strictly means the one in front, the foremost, and is therefore naturally used to signify a chief or leader. This title is expressly applied to the Messiah by Daniel (9 : 25), and the corresponding titles ἀρχων and ἀρχηγός to Christ in the New Testament (Acts 3 : 15. Heb. 2 : 10. Rev. 1 : 5), considered both as an example and a leader. The third name, being properly

the participle of a verb which means to command, might be considered as equivalent either to *preceptor* or *commander*, both derivatives from verbs of the same meaning. The idea of commander must predominate in any case, and is entitled to the preference, if either must be chosen to the entire exclusion of the other.

5. *Lo, a nation (that) thou knowest not thou shalt call, and a nation (that) have not known thee shall run unto thee, for the sake of Jehovah thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel, for he hath glorified thee.* The question which has chiefly divided interpreters, in reference to this verse, is, whether the object of address is the Messiah or the Church. The masculine forms prove nothing either way; because the Church is sometimes presented in the person of Israel, and sometimes personified as a woman. The most natural supposition is, that after speaking of the Messiah, he now turns to him and addresses him directly. If this be so, the verse affords an argument against the application of v. 4 to David, who could not be the subject of such a promise ages after his decease. At the same time, the facility with which the words can be applied to either subject, may be considered as confirming the hypothesis, that although the Messiah is the main subject of the verse, the Church is not entirely excluded. Their running indicates the eagerness with which they shall attach themselves to him and engage in his service. *For he hath glorified thee.* This expression is repeatedly used in the New Testament with reference to Christ. (See John 17 : 1, 5. Acts 3 : 13.) The form of expression in a part of this verse seems to be borrowed from 2 Sam. 22 : 44; but the resemblance neither proves that the Messiah is the subject of that passage nor that David is the subject of this.

6. *Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found; call ye upon him*

*while he is near.* The literal translation would be, *in his being found, in his being near.* By a sudden apostrophe he turns from the Messiah to those whom he had come to save, and exhorts them to embrace this great salvation, to be reconciled with God. A similar exhortation, implying like the present that the day of grace is limited, occurs in Zeph. 2 : 2, 3. The Jew had great cause to beware lest the Gentile should outstrip him, and the Gentile might be reasonably urged to partake of those advantages which hitherto had been restricted to the Jew ; but both are called to the same duty, namely, that of seeking and calling upon God, expressions elsewhere used both severally and together to express the whole work of repentance, faith, and new obedience.

7. *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the man of iniquity his thoughts, and let him return unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon* (literally, *multiply to pardon*). This is a continuation of the foregoing call, and at the same time an explanation of the way in which it was to be obeyed. We are here taught that the seeking of Jehovah and the calling upon him, just enjoined, involve an abandonment of sin and a return to righteousness of life. The imperative version of the future is warranted, if not required, by the form of the original. Even the future form, however, would convey the same essential meaning both in Hebrew and in English. *The wicked shall forsake* is in fact the strongest form of a command. *Way* is a common figure for the course of life. What is here meant is the *way of the wicked*, as Jeremiah calls it (12 : 1,) i. e. a habitually sinful course. The common version of the next phrase (*the unrighteous man*) gives the sense but not the whole force of the original construction. It mattered little to the writer's purpose whether he seemed to be himself the speaker or a mere reporter of the words of God, to whom in either case they must be finally ascribed. Hence the constant alternation

of the first, second, and third persons, in a style which sets all rules of unity and rigid laws of composition at defiance. The word translated *thoughts* is commonly employed not to denote opinions but designs or purposes, in which sense it is joined with *way*, in order to express the whole drift of the character and life. To return to God in both these respects is a complete description of repentance, implying an entire change of heart as well as life. The encouragement to seek God is not merely that he *may*, but that he *will* have mercy. Lowth's translation (*will receive him with compassion*) is enfeebling as well as inexact; because the act of receiving is implied not expressed, and the verb denotes not mere compassion but gratuitous and sovereign mercy. There is further encouragement contained in the expression *our God*. To the Jew it would suggest motives drawn from the covenant relation of Jehovah to his people, while the Gentile would regard it as an indirect assurance that even he was not excluded from God's mercy.

8. *For my thoughts (are) not your thoughts, nor your ways my ways, saith Jehovah.* Clear and simple as these words are in themselves, they have occasioned much dispute among interpreters, in reference to their nexus with what goes before. The earliest commentators, Jews and Christians, seem to have understood them as intended to meet an objection to the promise arising from its vastness and its freeness, by assuring us that such forgiveness, however foreign from the feelings and the practices of men, is not beyond the reach of the divine compassion. As if he had said, 'to you such forgiveness may appear impossible; but my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither your ways my ways.' Thus understood, the text may be compared with Matt. 19 : 26. Another explanation rests upon the false assumption that the words have reference to the Jews, and were intended to correct their prejudice against the calling of the Gentiles as at variance with the promises of God



to themselves. As if he had said, 'you may think the extension of my grace to them a departure from my settled ways and purposes; but my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor your ways my ways.' Others explain them as denoting the irrevocable nature of God's purposes and promises. In this sense, it may be considered parallel to Num. 23:19, and 1 Sam. 15:29. Is 31:2. 45:23. But this is neither the natural meaning of the words, nor one which stands in any obvious relation to what goes before. It is indeed hard to see any coherence in this sequence of ideas, 'let the wicked man repent, for my promise is irrevocable.' This objection does not lie against another very ancient explanation of the passage, founded on the obvious correspondence of the terms employed in this verse and in that before it, and especially the parallel expressions *ways* and *thoughts*, there applied to man and here to God. According to this last interpretation, we have here a reason given why the sinner must forsake his ways and thoughts, viz. because they are incurably at variance with those of God himself: 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; for my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither your ways my ways.' This interpretation has so greatly the advantage of the others, in facility and beauty of connection with what goes before, that it must be considered as at least affording the formal basis of the true interpretation, but without excluding wholly the ideas which according to the other theories these words express. They may all be reconciled indeed by making the disparity asserted have respect not merely to moral purity, but also to constancy, benevolence, and wisdom. As if he had said, 'you must forsake your evil ways and thoughts, and by so doing, you infallibly secure my favour; for as high as the heavens are above the earth, so far am I superior to you in mercy, not only in the rigour and extent of my requirements, but also in compassion for the guilty, in benevolent considera-



tion even for the gentiles, and in the constancy and firmness of my purposes when formed.'

9. *For (as) the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* This is an illustration by comparison of the negative assertion in the verse preceding. The *as* in the first member of the comparison is left out, as in Hos. 11 : 2. Ps. 48 : 6 (5) Job 7 : 9. Jer. 3 : 20. The full expression may be seen in ch. 10 : 11. The Hebrew preposition might here be taken in its proper sense of *from, away from*, as the reference is in fact to an interval of space ; but our idiom would hardly bear the strict translation, and comparison is certainly implied, if not expressed. The same comparison and in a similar application occurs Ps. 103 : 11.

10, 11. *For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and thither returneth not, but when it has watered the earth and made it bear and put forth and has given seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be which goeth out of my mouth ; it shall not return unto me void (or without effect), but when it has done that which I desired, and successfully done that for which I sent it.* This is a new comparison, suggested by the mention of the heavens and the earth in the preceding verse. The tenth and eleventh form a single sentence of unusual length in Hebrew composition. The one contains the comparison properly so-called, the other makes the application. The *word* of v. 11 is not merely prophecy or promise, but everything that God utters either in the way of prediction or command. The English version refers *has given* to the earth ; but this construction is precluded in Hebrew by the difference of gender. The effect is metaphorically represented as produced directly by the rain and snow. The general design of these two verses is to generate and foster confidence in what Jehovah has engaged to do.

12. *For with joy shall ye go forth, and in peace shall ye be led; the mountains and the hills shall break out before you into a shout, and all the trees of the field shall clap the hand.* Here as in many other places the idea of joyful change is expressed by representing all nature as rejoicing. The expression *go forth* is eagerly seized upon by some interpreters as justifying the restriction of the passage to the restoration from the Babylonish exile. But the real allusion in such cases is to the deliverance from Egypt, which is constantly referred to as a type of deliverance in general, so that every signal restoration or deliverance is represented as another exodus.

13. *Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress, and instead of the nettle the myrtle, and it shall be to Jehovah for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.* The same change which had just been represented by the shouting of the hills and the applause of the forests is now described as the substitution of the noblest trees for the most unprofitable and offensive plants. (Compare ch. 41 : 19.) An analogous but different figure for the same thing is the opening of rivers in the desert. (See above, ch. 35 : 6, 7. 43 : 19, 20.) Dropping the metaphor, the Prophet then says, in direct terms, that the change predicted shall redound to the glory of its author. *It shall be for a name*, i. e. it shall serve as a memorial, which is then described in other words as a *sign of perpetuity* or everlasting token. This memorial is called perpetual because it *shall not be cut off*, pass away, or be abolished.

## CHAPTER LVI.

WHILE the church, with its essential institutions, is to continue unimpaired, the old distinctions, national and personal, are to be done away, and the Jewish people robbed of that pre-eminence of which its rulers proved themselves unworthy.

The day is coming when the righteousness of God is to be fully revealed, without the veils and shackles which had hitherto confined it, v. 1. For this great change the best preparation is fidelity to the spirit of the old economy, v. 2. No personal or national distinctions will be any longer recognized, v. 3. Connection with the church will no longer be a matter of hereditary right, vs. 4, 5. The church shall be henceforth co-extensive with the world, vs. 6-8. But first, the carnal Israel must be abandoned to its enemies, v. 9. Its rulers are neither able nor worthy to deliver the people or themselves, vs. 10-12.

1. *Thus saith Jehovah, Keep ye judgment (or justice) and do righteousness; for near (is) my salvation to come, and my righteousness to be revealed.* The Jews refer this passage to their present dispersion, and understand it as declaring the conditions of their restoration. On the principle heretofore assumed, as the basis of our exposition, we can only regard it as a statement of the general laws which govern the divine dispensations towards the chosen people and the world at large. The reference is not merely to the ancient Israel, much less to the Jews of the captivity, still less to the Christian church distinctively considered, least of all to the Christian church of any one period. The doctrine of the passage is simply this, that they who enjoy extraordinary privileges, or expect extraordinary favours, are under corresponding obligations to do the will of God; and moreover that the nearer the manifestation of God's mercy,

whether in time or in eternity, the louder the call to righteousness of life. These truths are of no restricted application, but may be applied wherever the relation of a church or chosen people can be recognized.

2. *Happy the man (that) shall do this, and the son of man that shall hold it fast, keeping the sabbath from profaning it, and keeping his hand from doing all evil.* The pronoun *this* seems to refer to what follows, as in Ps. 7 : 4 (3) and Deut. 32 : 29. *Son of man* is simply an equivalent expression to the *man* of the other clause. The last clause is remarkable, and has occasioned much dispute among interpreters, on account of its combining a positive and negative description of the character required, the last of which is very general, and the first no less specific. A great variety of reasons have been given for the special mention of the Sabbath here. It has especially perplexed those writers who regard the Sabbath as a temporary ceremonial institution. The true explanation is afforded by a reference to the primary and secondary ends of the sabbatical institution, and the belief involved in its observance. In the first place, it implied a recognition of Jehovah as the omnipotent creator of the universe (Ex. 20 : 11. 31 : 17); in the next place, as the sanctifier of his people, not in the technical or theological sense, but as denoting him by whom they had been set apart as a peculiar people (Ex. 31 : 13. Ez. 20 : 12); in the next place, as the Saviour of this chosen people from the bondage of Egypt (Deut. 5 : 15). Of these great truths the Sabbath was a weekly remembrancer, and its observance by the people a perpetual recognition and profession, besides the practical advantages accruing to the maintenance of a religious spirit by the weekly recurrence of a day of rest. *Holding fast* is a common idiomatic expression for consistent perseverance in a certain course. It occurs not unfrequently in the New Testament. (Heb 4 : 4 6 : 18. Rev. 2 : 25. 3 : 11.)

3. *And let not the foreigner say, who has joined himself unto Jehovah, saying, Jehovah will separate me wholly from his people, and let not the eunuch say, Lo, I am a dry tree.* The essential meaning of this verse is, that all external disabilities shall be abolished, whether personal or national. To express the latter he makes use of a phrase which strictly means not *the son of the stranger*, as the common version has it, but the son of strangeness, or of a strange country. The whole class of personal disqualifications is represented by the case of the eunuch, in reference to Deut. 23 : 1, and as Calvin thinks to the promise in Gen. 15 : 5 and 22 : 17, from which that whole class was excluded. *I am a dry tree*, a proverbial description of childlessness, said to be still current in the east. It is possible, however, that the eunuch may be mentioned, simply because he stands at the beginning of the list of prohibitions in the law. In either case, the expression is generic or representative of more particulars than it expresses.

4, 5. *For thus saith Jehovah to (or, as to) the eunuchs who shall keep my sabbaths, and shall choose what I delight in, and take fast hold of my covenant, I will give to them in my house and within my walls a place and name better than sons and than daughters; an everlasting name I will give to him, which shall not be cut off.* According to some, the plural *sabbaths* is intended to include the sabbatical year and that of jubilee. If any distinction was intended, it was probably that between the wider and narrower meaning of the term *sabbaths*, i. e. the Sabbath properly so called, and the other institutions of religion with which it is connected. What it is that God delights in, may be learned from ch. 66 : 4. Jer. 9 : 24. Hos. 6 : 6. By holding fast my covenant is meant adhering to his compact with me, which includes obedience to the precepts and faith in the promises. By *my walls* we are not to understand those of Jerusalem, nor, with the modern writers, those of the tem-

ple, but in a more ideal sense, the walls of God's house or dwelling, which had just been mentioned. The promise is not merely one of free access to the material sanctuary, but of a home in the household or family of God, an image of perpetual occurrence in the Psalms of David. *Better than sons and daughters* may either mean better than the comfort immediately derived from children (as in Ruth 4 : 15), or better than the perpetuation of the name by hereditary succession. Most interpreters prefer the latter sense, but both may be included. A beautiful coincidence and partial fulfilment of the promise has been pointed out in the case of the Ethiopian eunuch whose conversion is recorded in the eighth of Acts, and whose memory is far more honoured in the church than it could have been by a long line of illustrious descendants.

6, 7. *And (as to) the foreigners joining themselves to Jehovah, to serve him and to love the name of Jehovah, to be to him for servants, every one keeping the Sabbath from profaning it, and holding fast my covenant, I will bring them to my mount of holiness, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their offerings and their sacrifices (shall be) to acceptance on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.* The verb שָׁרַת, although strictly a generic term, is specially appropriated to the official service of the priests and Levites. Some interpreters accordingly suppose it to be here said that the heathen shall partake of the sacerdotal honours elsewhere promised to the church. (See ch. 61 : 6. Ex. 49 : 6. 1 Pet. 2 : 5, 9. Rev. 1 : 6.) To love the name of Jehovah, is to love his attributes as manifested in his word and works. (Compare ch. 60 : 9. 66 : 5.) *Shall be called*, as in many other cases, implies that it shall be so. Our Saviour quotes a part of the last clause, not in reference to its main sense, but to what is incidentally mentioned, viz. its being called a house of prayer. This part of the sentence was applicable to the material temple while it lasted; but



the whole prediction could be verified only after its destruction, when the house of God even upon earth ceased to be a limited locality, and became co-extensive with the church in its enlargement and diffusion. The form of expression is derived, however, from the ceremonies of the old economy, and worship is described by names familiar to the writer and his original readers. (Compare Hos. 14 : 3. Heb. 13 : 13. John 4 : 21-23.) The general promise is the same as that in Mal. 1 : 11, and is so far from being inconsistent with the principles on which the old economy was founded, that it simply carries out its original design as settled and announced from the beginning.

8. *Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, the gatherer of the outcasts of Israel, Still (more) will I gather upon him (in addition) to his gathered.* This may either mean, I will go on to gather still more of his outcasts, or, besides his outcasts I will gather others. There is less difference between the two interpretations than at first sight there might seem to be. In either case the words are applicable to the calling of the gentiles. On the second supposition, which is commonly adopted, even by the Jewish writers, this is the direct and proper meaning of the words. But even on the other, they amount to the same thing, if we only give to Israel its true sense, as denoting not the Jewish nation as such, but the chosen people or the church of God, to which the elect heathen as really belong as the elect Jews, and are therefore just as much entitled to be called *outcasts of Israel*. It is true that our Saviour uses a similar expression (lost sheep of the House of Israel) in a restricted application to the Israelites properly so called ; but it is in a connection which brings the Jews and Gentiles into evident antithesis, and therefore leaves no doubt as to the sense in which the name Israel is to be understood.

9. *All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, all ye beasts in the forest !* The structure of this verse is somewhat unusual, consisting of two parallel members, with a third, equally related to both, interposed between them. It is an invitation to the enemies of Israel to destroy it. The people being represented, in the following verses, as a flock, their destroyers are naturally represented here as wild beasts. Some understand the invitation as ironical, or as a mere poetical description of the defenceless state in which Israel was left through the neglect of its natural protectors. It is more natural, however, to explain it as an indirect prediction of an actual event, clothed in Isaiah's favourite form of an apostrophe. All the modern writers seem to be agreed that the last clause as well as the first is a description of the object of address, and that the thing to be devoured must be supplied from the following verses. With the metaphors of this verse compare Ex. 23 : 29. Ez. 34 . 5-8. Jer. 7 : 33. 12 : 9, 50 : 17. Beasts of the field and of the forest are parallel expressions.

10. *His watchmen (are) blind all of them, they have not known (or do not know), all of them (are) dumb dogs, they cannot bark, dreaming, lying down, loving to slumber.* The pronoun *his* refers to *Israel*, as in v. 8, and thus proves clearly that no new discourse begins either with verse 9 or with that before us. Many give *do not know* the absolute sense of knowing nothing, being without knowledge ; but in all such cases it seems better to connect it with a definite object understood. We may here supply their duty, or the state of the flock, or the danger to which it is exposed. The difference between the past and present form is immaterial here ; because both are really included, the condition described being one of ancient date, but still continued. The dogs particularly meant are shepherds' dogs (Job 30 : 1), whose task it was to watch the flock, and by their barking to give notice of approaching danger. But these are dumb dogs which

cannot even bark, and therefore wholly useless. They are also negligent and lazy. Far from averting peril or announcing it, they do not see it. What was before expressed by the figure of a blind watchman, is here expressed by that of a shepherd's dog asleep. Some writers make the watchmen of this verse denote the prophets, as in ch. 52 : 8. Jer. 6 : 17. Ez. 3 : 17. 33 : 7. But others more correctly understand it as a figure for the rulers of the people generally, not excluding even the false prophets. The figurative title is expressive of that watchfulness so frequently described in the New Testament as an essential attribute of spiritual guides.

11. *And the dogs are greedy, they know not satiety, and they, the shepherds (or the shepherds themselves), know not how to distinguish (or act wisely); all of them to their own way are turned, (every) man to his own gain from his own quarter (or without exception).* A new turn is now given to the figures of the preceding verse. The dogs, though indolent, are greedy. The pronoun *they* is emphatic, and may either mean that these same dogs are at the same time shepherds, thus affording a transition to a different though kindred image, or it may be intended to distinguish between two kinds of rulers; as if he had said, while the dogs are thus indolent and greedy, they (the shepherds) are incompetent; or, while the shepherds' dogs are such, the shepherds themselves know not how to distinguish. The latter is probably the true construction; for although the same class of persons may be successively compared to shepherds' dogs and shepherds, it cannot even by a figure of speech be naturally said that the dogs themselves are shepherds. That voluptuous as well as avaricious indulgences are here referred to, is apparent from what follows in the next verse. The last word literally means *from his end* or *his extremity*, to which the older writers gave the sense of his quarter or direction, corresponding to *his own way*.

12. *Come ye, I will fetch wine, and we will intoxicate ourselves with strong drink, and like to-day (shall be) to-morrow, great, abundantly, exceedingly.* The description of the revellers is verified by quoting their own words, as in ch. 22 : 13. The language is that of one inviting others to join in a debauch ; hence the alternation of the singular and plural. The last clause professes or expresses a determination to prolong the revel till the morrow.

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## CHAPTER LVII.

THE righteous who died during the old economy were taken away from the evil to come, vs. 1, 2. The wicked who despised them were themselves proper objects of contempt, vs. 3, 4. Their idolatry is first described in literal terms, vs 5, 6. It is then represented as a spiritual adultery, vs. 7-9. Their obstinate persistency in sin is represented as the cause of their hopeless and remediless destruction, vs. 10-13. A way is prepared for the spiritual Israel to come out from among them, v. 14. The hopes of true believers shall not be deferred forever, vs. 15, 16. Even these, however, must be chastened for their sins, v. 17. But there is favour in reserve for all true penitents, without regard to national distinctions, vs. 18, 19. To the incorrigible sinner, on the other hand, peace is impossible, vs. 20, 21.

1. *The righteous perisheth, and there is no man laying (it) to heart, and men of mercy are taken away, with none considering (or perceiving) that from the presence of evil the righteous is taken*

*away*. The terms of this verse are specifically applicable neither to violent nor to natural death, as such considered, but are equally appropriate to either. *Laying to heart* is not merely feeling or appreciating, but observing and perceiving. *Men of mercy* is another description of the righteous, so called as the objects of God's mercy and as being merciful themselves. (See Matt. 5 : 7.) The last verb is doubly appropriate, first in its general though secondary sense of taking away, and then in its primary specific sense of gathering, i. e. gathering to one's fathers or one's people, an expression frequently applied in the Old Testament to death, and especially to that of godly men. (See Gen. 49 : 29. Judges 2 : 10.) The verb is used absolutely in this sense by Moses (Num. 20 : 26.)

2. *He shall go in peace (or enter into peace)—they shall rest upon their beds—walking straight before him*. The alternation of the singular and plural shows that the subject of the sentence is a collective person. The explanation commonly approved is that which makes the last phrase an additional description of the righteous, as one walking in his uprightness. It seems to be added as a kind of afterthought, to limit what immediately precedes, and preclude its application to all the dead without distinction. The peace and rest here meant are those of the body in the grave and of the soul in heaven; the former being frequently referred to as a kind of pledge and adumbration of the latter.

3. *And ye (or as for you), draw near hither, ye sons of the witch, seed of the adulterer and the harlot*. These words are addressed to the survivors of the judgments by which the righteous are described as having been removed. They are summoned to receive their punishment, or at least to appear before the judgment-seat. (Compare ch. 41 : 1.) The description which follows was of course designed to be extremely opprobrious; but

interpreters differ as to the precise sense of the terms employed. Some suppose that instead of simply charging them with certain crimes, he brings the charge against their parents, a species of reproach peculiarly offensive to the orientals. The older writers give a more specific meaning to the Prophet's metaphors, understanding by the adulterer the idol, by the harlot the apostate church, and by the children the corrupted offspring of this shameful apostasy. The occult arts are mentioned as inseparable adjuncts of idolatry. Whoredom and sorcery are again combined in Mal. 3 : 5, and elsewhere.

4. *At whom do you amuse yourselves? At whom do you enlarge the mouth, prolong the tongue? Are you not children of rebellion (or apostasy), a seed of falsehood?* This retorts the impious contempt of the apostates on themselves. There is no need, however, of supposing that they had cast these very same reproaches on the godly. The meaning is not necessarily that they were what they falsely charged their brethren with being. All that is certainly implied is, that they were unworthy to treat them with contempt. The opening or stretching of the mouth in mockery is mentioned Ps. 22 : 7, 13. 35 : 21. Lam. 2 : 16, and in chap. 58 : 9 below. The lolling of the tongue as a derisive gesture is referred to by Persius in poetry and Livy in prose. The form of expostulation is similar to that in ch. 37 : 23. Here, as in the preceding verse, some regard *seed* and *children* as mere idiomatic pleonasms, or at most, as rhetorical embellishments. Of those who understand them strictly, some suppose the qualities of falsehood and apostasy to be predicated of the parents, others of the children. Both are probably included; they were worthy of their parentage, and diligently filled up the measure of their fathers' iniquity. (See ch. 1 : 4.) By 'a seed of falsehood' we may understand a spurious brood, and at the same time one itself perfidious and addicted to a false religion.



5. *Inflamed (or inflaming yourselves) among the oaks (or terebinths), under every green tree, slaughtering the children in the valleys, under the clefts of the rocks.* Their idolatrous practices are now described in detail. The first word of this verse properly denotes libidinous excitement, and is here used with reference to the previous representation of idolatry as spiritual whoredom or adultery. There seems to be an allusion to the valleys round Jerusalem, in one of which, the valley of the son of Hinnom, we know that Moloch was adored with human victims. The clefts of the rocks, or cliffs projecting in consequence of excavations, is a circumstance perfectly in keeping with the topography of that spot. The minute description of idolatry given in this passage is exceedingly perplexing to those writers who fix the date of composition at the period of the exile. A perfect solution of the difficulty is afforded by our own hypothesis, that the Prophet, from the whole field of vision spread before him, singles out the most revolting traits and images by which he could present in its true aspect the guilt and madness of apostasy from God.

6. *Among the smooth (stones) of the valley (or the brook) is thy portion; they, they, are thy lot; also to them hast thou poured out a drink-offering, thou hast brought up a meal-offering. Shall I for these things be consoled (i. e. satisfied without revenge)? Thy portion, i. e. the objects of thy choice and thy affection (Jer. 10: 16).* The word *stones* is correctly supplied in the English version. (See 1 Sam. 17: 40.) Others supply *places*, and suppose the phrase to mean open cleared spots in the midst of wooded valleys, places cleared for the performance of religious rites. In favour of this meaning, is the not unfrequent use of the Hebrew word to signify *not hairy*, and in figurative application to the earth, not wooded, free from trees. Smooth stones may mean either polished or anointed stones, such as were set up by the patriarchs as memorials (Gen. 28: 18. 35: 14), and

by the heathen as objects of worship. Thus Arnobius says, that before his conversion to Christianity he never saw an oiled stone without addressing it and praying to it. This explanation of the first clause agrees best with what follows and with the emphatic repetition, *they, they, are thy portion*, which is more natural in reference to the objects than to the mere place of worship.

7. *On a high and elevated mountain thou hast placed thy bed, also there (or even thither) hast thou gone up to offer sacrifice.* The figure of adulterous attachment is resumed. (Compare Ez. 16: 24, 25, 31.) That the mountain is not used as a mere figure for an elevated spot is clear from the obvious antithesis between it and the valleys before mentioned. Still less ground is there for supposing any reference to the worship of mountains themselves. By the bed here, some understand the couch on which the ancients reclined at their sacrificial feasts. All other writers seem to give it the same sense as in Prov. 7: 17, and Ezek. 23: 17. In the last clause the figure is resolved and making the bed explained to mean offering sacrifice.

8. *And behind the door and the door-post thou hast placed thy memorial, for away from me thou hast uncovered (thyself or thy bed), and hast gone up, thou hast enlarged thy bed and hast covenanted with them, (or with some of them), thou hast loved their bed, thou hast provided room.* Interpreters are much divided as to the particular expressions of this very obscure verse, although agreed in understanding it as a description of the grossest idolatry. The image of a false god may be reckoned its memorial, or that which brings to mind the absent object. Perhaps they are here described as thrusting the memorial of Jehovah into a corner to make room for that of the beloved idol. Some suppose a special reference to the worship of Penates, Lares, or household gods. The rest of

the verse describes idolatry as adulterous intercourse with them *Room*, literally *hand*, as in ch. 56 : 5.

9. *And thou hast gone to the king in oil and hast multiplied thine unguents, and hast sent thine ambassadors even to a far-off (land,) and hast gone (or sent) down even to hell.* The first verb has been variously explained as meaning to see, to look around, to appear, to be adorned, to sing, to carry gifts. By *the king* some understand the king of Babylon or Egypt, and refer the clause to the eagerness with which the Prophet's contemporaries sought out foreign alliances. Most writers understand it as a name for idols generally, or for Moloch in particular.  $\text{𐤓𐤕𐤕𐤔}$  is commonly explained to mean *with oil* or ointment (as a gift); but some understand it to mean *in oil*, i. e. anointed, beautified, adorned. Upon the explanation of this phrase of course depends that of the next, where unguents are said to be multiplied, either in the way of gifts to others or as means of self-adornment.

10. *In the greatness of thy way (or the abundance of thy travel) thou hast laboured ; (but) thou hast not said, There is no hope. Thou hast found the life of thy hand ; therefore thou art not weak.* Whether *way* be understood as a figure for the whole course of life, or as involving a specific allusion to the journeys mentioned in v. 9, the general sense is still the same, viz. that no exertion in the service of her false gods could weary or discourage her. This is so obviously the meaning of the whole, that the common version *thou art wearied*, seems to be precluded, the rather as the verb may be used to denote the cause as well as the effect, i. e. exertion no less than fatigue. The essential idea conveyed by the obscure phrase *life of thy hand* is that of *strength*. In translation this essential sense may be conveyed under several different forms: 'Thou hast found thy hand still alive, or still able to sustain life, etc.

11. *And whom hast thou feared and been afraid of, that thou shouldest lie? and me thou hast not remembered, thou hast not called to mind (or laid to heart). Is it not (because) I hold my peace, and that of old, that thou wilt not fear me?* They have no real fear of God; why then should they affect to serve him? His forbearance only served to harden and embolden them. 'Have I not long kept silence? It cannot be that you fear me.' The image is identical with that presented in ch. 42: 14. See also ch. 40: 27. 51: 12, 13.

12. *I will declare thy righteousness and thy works, and they shall not profit (or avail) thee.* The earlier writers make the first clause ironical; but this is unnecessary, as the simplest and most obvious construction is in all respects the most satisfactory. *I will declare thy righteousness*, i. e. I will show clearly whether thou art righteous, *and in order to do this I must declare thy works*; and if this is done, *they cannot profit thee*, because instead of justifying they will condemn thee.

13. *In thy crying (i. e. when thou criest for help), let thy gatherings save thee! And (yet) all of them the wind shall take up and a breath shall take away, and the (one) trusting in me shall inherit the land and possess my holy mountain.* This is merely a strong contrast between the impotence of idols and the power of Jehovah to protect their followers respectively. Some understand the word translated *gatherings* generically, as denoting all that they could scrape together for their own security, including idols, armies, and all other objects of reliance. Those who restrict the passage to the Babylonish exile must of course explain the promise as relating merely to the restoration; but the context and the usage of the Scriptures is in favour of a wider explanation, in which the possession of the land is an appointed symbol of the highest blessings which are in reserve for true believers here and hereafter

14. *And he shall say, Cast up, cast up, clear the way, take up the stumbling-block from the way of my people!* He who had long been silent speaks at last, and that to announce the restoration of his people. The image here presented, and the form of the expression, are the same as in ch. 35 : 8. 40 : 3. 49 : 11. 62 : 10.

15. *For thus saith the High and Exalted One, inhabiting eternity, and Holy is his name ; On high and holy will I dwell, and with the broken and humble of spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the broken (or contrite ones).* This verse assigns a reason why the foregoing promise might be trusted, notwithstanding the infinite disparity between the giver and the objects of his favour. Notwithstanding the intimate connection of the verses, there is no need of referring *thus saith* to what goes before, as if he had said, these assurances are uttered by the High and Exalted One. Analogy and usage necessarily connect them with what follows, the relation of the verse to that before it being clearly indicated by the *for* at the beginning. You need not hesitate to trust the promise which is involved in this command, for the High and Holy One has made the following solemn declaration. The only reason for translating *נִשְׁבָּח* *exalted* rather than *lofty*, is that the former retains the participial form of the original. The same two epithets are joined in ch. 6 : 1, which is regarded by the modern critics as the oldest extant composition of Isaiah. Compare with this verse ch. 33 : 5. 63 : 15. 66 : 1, 2. Ps. 22 : 4. 113 : 5, 6. 138 : 6.

16. *For not to eternity will I contend, and not to perpetuity will I be wroth ; for the spirit from before me will faint, and the souls (which) I have made.* A reason for exercising mercy is here drawn from the frailty of the creature. (Compare ch. 42 : 3. Ps. 78 : 38, 39. 103 : 9, 14.) Suffering being always repre

sented in Scripture as the consequence of sin, its infliction is often metaphorically spoken of as a divine quarrel or controversy with the sufferer. *From before me* is connected by the Hebrew accents with the verb *to faint*, and indicates God's presence as the cause of the depression. A more perfect parallelism would, however, be obtained by understanding *from before me* as referring to the origin of human life and as corresponding to the words *which I have made* in the other member.

17. *For his covetous iniquity I am wroth and will smite him, (I will) hide me and will be wroth ; for he has gone on turning away (i. e. persevering in apostasy) in the way of his heart (or of his own inclination).* The futures in the first clause show that both the punishment and mercy are still future. The first phrase in the verse has been variously understood. Some suppose covetousness to be here used in a wide sense for all selfish desires or undue attachment to the things of time and sense, a usage which they think may be distinctly traced both in the Old and New Testament. (See Ps. 119 : 36. Ez. 33 : 31. 1 Tim. 6 : 10. Eph. 5 : 5.) Perhaps the safest and most satisfactory explanation is that which adheres to the strict sense of the word, but supposes covetousness to be here considered as a temptation and incentive to other forms of sin. The singular pronouns *his* and *him* refer to the collective noun *people*, or rather to *Israel* as an ideal person. In the last clause the writer suddenly reverts from the future to the past, in order to assign the cause of the infliction threatened in the first. This connection can be rendered clear in English only by the use of the word *for*, although the literal translation would be *and he went*

18. *His ways I have seen, and I will heal him, and will guide him, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners.* The healing here meant is forgiveness and conversion, with a reference to ch. 6 : 10 and Ps 41 : 5 (4.) This obvious meaning of



the figure creates a difficulty in explaining the foregoing words so as to make the connection appear natural. Some suppose an antithesis, and make the particle adversative. 'I have seen his (evil) ways, but I will (nevertheless) heal him.' There is then a promise of gratuitous forgiveness similar to that in ch. 43:25 and 48:9. The promise to *restore* consolation implies not only that it had been once enjoyed but also that it should *compensate* for the intervening sorrows, as the Hebrew word means properly to make good or indemnify.

19. *Creating the fruit of the lips, Peace, peace to the far off and to the near, saith Jehovah, and I heal him.* The fruit or product of the lips is speech, and creating as usual implies almighty power and a new effect. By the *far* and *near* some understand the Jews and Gentiles (compare Acts 10:34-36. Eph. 2:17); others, all the Jews wherever scattered (ch. 43:5-7. 49:12). The Targum makes the distinction an internal one, the just who have kept the law, who have returned to it by sincere repentance. Some understand the words as abolishing all difference between the earlier and later converts, an idea similar to that embodied in our Saviour's parable of the labourers in the vineyard.

20. *And the wicked (are) like the troubled sea, for rest it cannot, and its waters cast up mire and dirt.* Interpreters are commonly agreed in making this verse a necessary limitation of the foregoing promise to its proper objects. There is a force in the original which cannot be retained in a translation arising from the etymological affinity between the words translated *wicked*, *troubled*, and *cast up*. Among the various epithets applied to sinners, the one here used is that which originally signifies their turbulence or restlessness. Lowth's version of this last clause is more than usually plain and vigorous: *its waters work up mire and filth*. The verb means strictly to expel or drive

out, and is therefore happily descriptive of the natural process here referred to. There seems to be allusion to this verse in Jude v. 13.

21. *There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.* That *peace* is here to be taken in its strict sense, and not in that of welfare or prosperity, is clear from the comparison in the preceding verse. This verse, according to some writers, closes the second great division of the Later Prophecies. For the true sense of the words themselves, see above, on ch. 48 : 22.

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## CHAPTER LVIII.

THE rejection of Israel as a nation is the just reward of their unfaithfulness, v. 1. Their religious services are hypocritical, v. 2. Their mortifications and austerities are nullified by accompanying wickedness, vs. 3—5. They should have been connected with the opposite virtues, vs. 6—7. In that case they would have continued to enjoy the divine favour, vs. 8, 9. They are still invited to make trial of this course, with an ample promise of prosperity and blessing to encourage them, vs. 10—14.

1. *Cry with the throat, spare not, like the trumpet raise thy voice, and tell to my people their transgression and to the house of Jacob their sins.* Although this may be conveniently assigned as the beginning of the third part, according to the theory propounded in the Introduction, it is really a direct continuation of the previous discourse. The object of address is the Prophet himself. Crying with the throat or from the lungs is here op

posed to a simple motion of the lips and tongue. (See 1 Sam 1 : 13.) The common version (*cry aloud*) is therefore substantially correct, though somewhat vague. The positive command is enforced by the negative one, *spare not*, as in ch. 54 : 2. The comparison with a trumpet is of frequent occurrence in the Book of Revelation. (See e. g. ch. 1 : 10. 4 : 1) The loudness of the call is intended to suggest the importance of the subject, and perhaps the insensibility of those to be convinced. The Prophet here seems to turn away from avowed apostates to hypocritical professors of the truth. The restriction of the verse to Isaiah's contemporaries, or to the Jews of the Babylonish exile, is as perfectly gratuitous as its restriction to the Pharisees of Christ's time, or to the Protestant churches at the decline of the Reformation. The points of similarity with all or any of these periods arise from its being a description of what has often occurred and will occur again. It was important that a phrase of human history so real and important should form a part of this prophetic picture, and accordingly it has not been forgotten.

2. *And me day (by) day they will seek, and the knowledge of my ways they will delight in (or desire), like a nation which has done right and the judgment of its God has not forsaken; they will ask of me righteous judgments, the approach to God (or of God) they will delight in (or desire).* The older writers understand this as a description of hypocrisy, as practised in a formal seeking (i. e. worshipping) of God and a professed desire to know his ways (i. e. the doctrines and duties of the true religion), the external appearance of a just and godly people, who delight in nothing more than in drawing near to God (i. e. in worship and communion with him). But all the later German writers put a very different sense upon the passage. They apply it not to hypocritical formality, but to a discontented and incredulous impatience of delay in the fulfilment of God's

promises. According to this view of the matter, seeking God daily means importunate solicitation; delight in the knowledge of his ways is eager curiosity to know his providential plans and purposes; the judgments of righteousness which they demand are either saving judgments for themselves or destroying judgments for their enemies; the approach which they desire is not their own approach to God but his approach to them for their deliverance; and the words *like a nation* etc. are descriptive not of a simulated piety, but of a self-righteous belief that by their outward services they had acquired a meritorious claim to the divine interposition in their favour. It is somewhat remarkable that a sentence of such length should without violence admit of two interpretations so entirely different, and the wonder is enhanced by the fact that both the senses may be reconciled with the ensuing context. The only arguments which seem to be decisive in favour of the first, are its superior simplicity and the greater readiness with which it is suggested to most readers by the language of the text itself, together with the fact that it precludes the necessity of limiting the words to the Babylonish exile, for which limitation there is no ground either in the text or context.

3. *Why have we fasted and thou hast not seen (it), afflicted our soul (or ourselves) and thou wilt not know (it)? Behold, in the day of your fast ye will find pleasure, and all your labours ye will exact.* The two interpretations which have been propounded of the foregoing verse agree in making this a particular exemplification of the people's self-righteous confidence in the meritorious efficacy of their outward services. The first clause contains their complaint, and the last the prophet's answer. The structure of the first clause is like that in ch. 5: 4. 50: 2. In our idiom the idea would be naturally thus expressed, Why dost thou not see when we fast, or recognize our merit when we mortify ourselves before thee? The word *soul* here

may either mean the appetite, or the soul as distinguished from the body, or it may supply the place of the reflexive pronoun *self*, which last is entitled to the preference, because the context shows that their mortifications were not of a spiritual but of a corporeal nature. The combination of the preterite (*hast not seen*) and the future (*will not know*) includes all time. The clause describes Jehovah as indifferent and inattentive to their laboured austerities. The reason given is analogous to that for the rejection of their sacrifices in ch. 1 : 11–13, viz. the combination of their formal service with unhallowed practice. The meaning of the next clause is that they made their pretended self-denial a means or an occasion of sinful gratification. The remaining member of the sentence has been variously explained. According to the Septuagint and Vulgate, it charges them with specially oppressing their dependants at such times. Luther supposes a particular allusion to the treatment of debtors. Some prefer the specific sense of labourers or workmen forced to toil on fast-days as at other times. *Ye exact all your labours*, i. e. all the labour due to you from your dependants.

4. *Behold, for strife and contention ye will fast, and to smite with the fist of wickedness; ye shall not (or ye will not) fast to-day (so as) to make your voice heard on high.* Some understand this as a further reason why their fasts were not acceptable to God; others suppose the same to be continued, and refer what is here said to the maltreatment of the labourers or debtors mentioned in the verse preceding. To smite with the fist of wickedness is a periphrasis for fighting, no doubt borrowed from the provision of the law in Ex. 21 : 18. Some early writers understand the last clause as a prohibition of noisy quarrels, to make the voice heard on high being taken as equivalent to letting it be heard in the street (ch. 42 : 2). The later writers give it a meaning altogether different, by taking מְרוֹם in the sense of heaven (ch.

57. 15), and the whole clause as a declaration that such fasting would not have the desired effect of gaining audience and acceptance for their prayers.

5. *Shall it be like this, the fast that I will choose, the day of man's humbling himself? Is it to hang his head like a bulrush and make sackcloth and ashes his bed? Wilt thou call this a fast, and a day of acceptance (an acceptable day) to Jehovah?* The general meaning of this verse is clear, although its structure and particular expressions are marked with a strong idiomatic peculiarity which makes exact translation very difficult. The interrogative form, as in many other cases, implies strong negation mingled with surprise. Nothing is gained but something lost by dropping the future forms of the first clause. The second member of the first clause is not part of the contemptuous description of a mere external fast, but belongs to the definition of a true one, as a time for men to practise self-humiliation. He does not ask whether the fast which he chooses is a day for a man to afflict himself, implying that it is not, which would be destructive of the very essence of a fast; but he asks whether the fast which he has chosen as a time for men to humble and afflict themselves is such as this, i. e. a mere external self-abasement. The effect of fasting as an outward means and token of sincere humiliation, may be learned from the case of Ahab (1 Kings 21 : 27-29) and the Ninevites (Jonah 3 : 5-9). The use of sackcloth and ashes in connection with fasting is recorded in Esther 9 : 3.

6. *Is not this the fast that I will choose, to loosen bands of wickedness, to undo the fastenings of the yoke, and to send away the crushed (or broken) free, and every yoke ye shall break?* Most interpreters suppose a particular allusion to the detention of Hebrew servants after the seventh year, contrary to the express provisions of the law (Ex. 21 : 2. Lev. 25. 39, 41. Deut. 15: 12)



It is evident, however, that the terms were so selected as to be descriptive of oppression universally; to make which still more evident, the Prophet adds a general command or exhortation, *Ye shall break every yoke*. The change of construction in the last clause from the infinitive to the future, is so common as to be entitled to consideration, not as a solecism but a Hebrew idiom. There is no need therefore of adopting the indirect and foreign construction, *that ye break every yoke*. Some understand this passage as expressly condemning and prohibiting all fasts, but most writers still maintain the old opinion, that it merely shows the spirit which is necessary to a true fast.

7. *Is it not to break unto the hungry thy bread? and the afflicted, the homeless, thou shalt bring home; for thou shalt see one naked and shalt clothe him, and from thine own flesh shalt not hide thyself.* The change of construction to the future in the first clause is precisely the same as in the preceding verse. The construction of the second clause is similar to that in v. 2. It is best to retain the form of the original, not only upon general grounds, but because *thou shalt see the naked* seems to be a substantive command corresponding to *thou shalt not hide thyself*. For the use of *flesh* to signify near kindred, see Gen. 29 : 14. 37 : 27. 2 Sam. 5 : 1. With the general precepts of the verse compare ch. 32 : 6. Job 31 : 16-22. Ez. 18 : 7. Prov. 22 : 9. Ps. 112 : 9. Matt. 25 : 36. Rom. 12 : 13. Heb. 13 : 2, 3. James 2 : 15, 16; and with the last clause, Matt. 15 : 5, 6.

8. *Then shall break forth as the dawn thy light, and thy healing speedily shall spring up; then shall go before thee thy righteousness, and the glory of Jehovah shall be thy reward (or bring up thy rear).* It is evident that the writer has here lost sight of the particular example upon which he had been dwelling so minutely, and is now entirely occupied with the effects which would arise from a conformity to God's will, not in refer-

ence to fasting merely, but to every other part of duty. *Then* i. e. when this cordial compliance shall have taken place. The verb to break forth (literally, *to be cleft*), elsewhere applied to the hatching of eggs (ch. 59 : 5) and the gushing of water (ch. 35 : 6), is here used in reference to the dawn or break of day, a common figure for relief succeeding deep affliction. (See ch. 8 : 20. 9 : 2. 60 : 1.) By a mixture of metaphors, which does not in the least obscure the sense, this healing is here said to sprout or germinate, a figure employed elsewhere to denote the sudden, rapid, and spontaneous growth or rise of anything. (See above, on ch. 42 : 9 and 43 : 19.) In the last clause a third distinct figure is employed to express the same idea, viz. that of a march like the journey through the wilderness, with the pillar of cloud, as the symbol of God's presence, going before and after. (See above, on ch. 52 : 12 ; and compare Ex. 13 : 21. 14 : 19.) Jehovah here assumes the conduct of his people, as their righteousness or justifier. (See Jer. 23 : 6. 33 : 16 ; and compare Isaiah 54 : 17.) The parallel term *glory* may then be understood as denoting the manifested glory of Jehovah, or Jehovah himself in glorious epiphany ; just as his presence with his people in the wilderness was manifested by the pillar of cloud and of fire, which sometimes went before them and at other times brought up their rear. (See above, on ch. 52 : 12.)

9. *Then shalt thou call and Jehovah will answer, thou shalt cry and he will say, Behold me* (here I am), *if thou wilt put away from the midst of thee the yoke, the pointing of the finger, and the speaking of vanity.* The *then* may either be connected with what goes before or correspond to *if* in the other clause, like *then, when*, in English. The conditional form of the promise implies that it was not so with them now, of which indeed they are themselves represented as complaining in v. 3. The idea of this verse might be expressed in the occidental

idiom by saying, *when thou callest, Jehovah will answer ; when thou criest, he will say, Behold me.* (See above, on ch. 50 : 2.) The yoke is again mentioned as the symbol of oppression. (See v. 6) The pointing of the finger is a gesture of derision. The Arabs have a verb derived from *finger* and denoting scornful ridicule. The object of contempt in this case may be the pious or the unfortunate. Words of vanity in Zech. 10 : 2 means falsehood, which is here retained by some, while others give it the specific sense of slander, secret and malignant machination, censorious and unnecessary fault-finding, strife and bickerings. All these may be included in the general sense of evil speech or wicked words.

10. *And (if) thou wilt let out thy soul to the hungry, and the afflicted soul will satisfy, then shall thy light arise in the darkness, and thy gloom as the (double light or) noon.* The figure in the last clause is a common one for happiness succeeding sorrow. (See Judg. 5 : 31. Ps. 112 : 4. Job 11 : 17.)

11. *And Jehovah will guide thee ever, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and thy bones will be invigorate, and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters shall not fail.* The promise of guidance had already been given in ch. 57 : 18. (Compare Ps. 73 : 24. 78 : 14.) The common version of the next clause (*and make fat thy bones*) is sanctioned by the Septuagint, but the version *strengthen* is adopted by most modern writers. Similar allusions to the bones as the seat of strength occur in Ps. 51 : 10 (8) and Job 21 : 24. The figure in the last clause is the converse of that in ch. 1 : 30. There is here a climax. Not content with the image of a well-watered garden, he substitutes that of the stream, or rather of the spring itself. The general idea is a favourite with Isaiah. (See above, ch. 30 : 25. 33 : 21. 35 : 6, 7. 41 : 17. 43 : 20. 44 : 4.

48:21. 49:10.) The exodus from Egypt had already made these images familiar and appropriate to any great deliverance.

12. *And they shall build from thee the ruins of antiquity (or perpetuity), foundations of age and age (i. e. of ages) shall thou raise up; and it shall be called to thee (or thou shalt be called.) Repairer of the breach, Restorer of paths for dwelling. From thee* denotes something more than mere connection or descent, and, unless forbidden by something in the context, must be taken to signify a going forth from Israel into other lands. Thus understood, the clause agrees exactly with the work assigned to Israel in these prophecies, viz. that of reclaiming the apostate nations, and building the wastes of a desolated world. As עֲתִידָא obviously refers to past time, this is the only natural interpretation of the corresponding phrase, *generation and generation*. Foundations which have lain bare, or buildings whose foundations have lain bare for ages. For this metaphor, compare Am. 9:11; for that of a highway, ch. 19:23. 35:8; and for that of the breach, Ez. 13:5. 22:30. *For dwelling*, i. e. that the land may be inhabited.

13. *If thou wilt turn away thy foot from the Sabbath to do thy pleasure on my holy day, and wilt call the Sabbath a delight, (and) the holy (day) of Jehovah honourable, and wilt honour it by not doing thy own ways, by not finding thy pleasure and talking talk.* The version of which some give, *turn away thy foot on the Sabbath*, is inconsistent with the form of the original, as well as with the figure, which is that of something trodden down and trampled, or at least encroached upon. The mere outward observance was of no avail, unless the institution were regarded with reverence, as of God; nay more, with complacency, as in itself delightful. To *call* it a delight is to acknowledge it to be such. As the construction of this Hebrew verb is foreign from our idiom, it may be best explained by a para-

phrase. 'If thou wilt give to the Sabbath the name of a delight, and to the holy day or ordinance of Jehovah that of honourable.' But mere acknowledgment is not enough; it must not only be admitted to deserve honour, but in fact receive it. Hence he adds, and if thou wilt honour it thyself, *by not doing*, literally, away from doing, so as not to do. (See ch. 5 : 6. 49 : 15.) Doing thy own ways, although not a usual combination, is rendered intelligible by the constant use of *way* in Hebrew to denote a course of conduct. *Speaking speech* or talking talk is by some regarded as equivalent to speaking vanity, in v. 9. The modern writers, for the most part, are in favour of the explanation, speaking mere words, idle talk. (Compare Matt. 12 : 36.) As to the importance here attached to the Sabbath, see above, on ch. 56 : 2.

14. *Then shalt thou be happy in Jehovah, and I will make thee ride upon the heights of the earth, and I will make thee eat the heritage of Jacob thy father, for Jehovah's mouth hath spoken it.* The first verb is combined with the divine name elsewhere to express both a duty and a privilege. (Compare Psalm 37 : 4 with Job 22 : 26. 27 : 10.) The next phrase is descriptive of conquest and triumphant possession, as in Deut. 32 : 13, from which the expression is derived by all the later writers who employ it. To eat the heritage is to enjoy it and derive subsistence from it. It is called the heritage of Jacob, as distinct from that of Ishmael and Esau, although equally descended from the Father of the Faithful. The last clause is added to ensure the certainty of the event as resting not on human but divine authority. See above, on ch. 1 : 2.

## CHAPTER LIX.

THE fault of Israel's rejection is not in the Lord but in themselves, vs. 1, 2. They are charged with sins of violence and injustice, vs. 3, 4. The ruinous effects of these corruptions are described, vs. 5, 6. Their violence and injustice are as fatal to themselves as to others, vs. 7, 8. The moral condition of the people is described as one of darkness and hopeless degradation, vs. 9-15. In this extremity Jehovah interposes to deliver the true Israel, vs. 16, 17. This can only be effected by the destruction of the carnal Israel, v. 18. The divine presence shall no longer be subjected to local restrictions, v. 19. A Redeemer shall appear in Zion to save the true Israel, v. 20. The old temporary dispensation shall give place to the dispensation of the Word and Spirit, which shall last forever, v. 21.

1. *Behold, not shortened is Jehovah's hand from saving, and not benumbed is his ear from hearing*, i. e. so as not to save, and not to hear, or too short to save, too dull to hear. On this use of the preposition, see above on ch. 58 : 13, and the references there made. The Prophet merely pauses, as it were, for a moment, to exonerate his master from all blame, before continuing his accusation of the people. The beginning of a chapter here is simply a matter of convenience, as the following context has precisely the same character with that before it. The only explanation of the passage which allows it to speak for itself, without gratuitous additions or embellishments, is that which likens it to ch. 42 : 18-25, 43 : 22-28, and 50 : 1, 2, as a solemn exhibition of the truth that the rejection of God's ancient people was the fruit of their own sin, and not to be imputed either to unfaithfulness on his part, or to want of strength or wisdom to



protect them. For the true sense of the metaphor here used, see above, on ch. 50 : 2.

2. *But your iniquities have been separating between you and your God, and your sins have hid (his) face from you, so as not to hear.* The general idea of this verse is otherwise expressed in Jer. 5 : 25, while in Lam. 3 : 44 the same prophet reproduces both the thought and the expression, with a distinct mention of the intervening object as a cloud, which may possibly have been suggested by the language of Isaiah himself in ch. 44 : 22. The force of the particle before the last verb is the same as in ch. 44 : 18 and 49 : 15. It does not mean specifically that *he will not*, much less that *he cannot hear*, but that *he doth not hear*. It is still better, however, to retain the infinitive form of the original by rendering it, (*so as*) *not to hear*.

3. *For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity ; your lips have spoken falsehood, your tongue will utter wickedness.* The Prophet now, according to a common usage of the Scriptures, classifies the prevalent iniquities as sins of the hands, the mouth, the feet, as if to intimate that every member of the social body was affected. On the staining of the hands with blood, see above, ch. 1 : 15. The preterite and future forms describe the evil as habitual, and ought to be retained in the translation, were it only for the purpose of exhibiting the characteristic form of the original. The wide meaning of the whole description is evident from Paul's combining parts of it with phrases drawn from several Psalms remarkably resembling it, in proof of the depravity of human nature. (Rom. 3 : 15-17.)

4. *There is none calling with (or for) justice, and there is none contending with truth ; they trust in vanity and speak falsehood, conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity.* Some understand the

first clause as meaning that none demand justice because they have no hope of obtaining it. Others make *calling* parallel to *contending*, and *with justice* to *with truth*. 'No one pleads fairly or sues honestly.'

5. *Eggs of the basilisk they have hatched, and webs of the spider they will spin (or weave) ; the (one) eating of their eggs shall die, and the crushed (egg) shall hatch out a viper.* The figure of the serpent is substantially the same as in ch. 14 : 29. (Compare Deut. 32 : 33 ) The precise varieties intended are of little exegetical importance. The figure of the spider's web is added to express the idea both of hurtfulness and futility. (See Job 8 : 14.)

6. *Their webs shall not become (or be for) clothing, and they shall not cover themselves with their works ; their works are works of mischief (or iniquity), and the doing of violence is in their hands.* The first clause does not seem to form a part of what the writer meant at first to say, but is a kind of after-thought, by which he gives a new turn to the sentence, and expresses an additional idea without a change of metaphor. Having introduced the spider's web, in connection with the serpent's egg, as an emblem of malignant and treacherous designs, he here repeats the first but for another purpose, namely, to suggest the idea of futility and worthlessness. This application may have been suggested by the frequent reference to webs and weaving as conducive to the comfort and emolument of men ; but spiders' webs can answer no such purpose. The idea that it is not fit or cannot be applied to this end, although not exclusively expressed, is really included in the general declaration that they *shall not* be so used. *Works* in the first clause simply means *what they have made* ; but in the second, where the metaphor is dropped, this version would be inadmissible.

7. *Their feet to evil will run, and they will hasten to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of mischief (or iniquity); wasting and ruin are in their paths.* The first clause expresses not a mere disposition, but an eager proclivity to wrong. The word translated *thoughts* has here and elsewhere the specific sense of purposes, contrivances, devices. *Their paths* are the paths in which their feet run to evil and make haste to shed innocent blood. The two nouns combined in the last clause strictly denote desolation and crushing, i. e. utter ruin. With this verse compare Prov. 1 : 16, and the evil way of ch. 55 : 7 above.

8. *The way of peace they have not known, and there is no justice in their paths; their courses they have rendered crooked for them; every one walking in them knows not peace.* The obvious and simple meaning is, that their lives are not pacific but contentious. The erroneous principle involved in all specific interpretations is refuted by the comprehensive sense which the apostle puts upon the words in the passage which has been already cited (Rom. 3 : 15-17).

9. *Therefore is judgment far from us, and righteousness will not overtake us; we wait for light and behold darkness; for splendours, (and) in obscurities we walk.* The future form of all the verbs in this verse intimates that they expect this state of things to continue.

10. *We grope like the blind for the wall, like the eyeless we grope; we stumble at noonday as in twilight, in thick darkness like the dead.* These figures are expressive not only of physical but of moral evil. Compare Deut. 28 : 29 and Zeph. 1 : 17.

11. *We growl like the bears, all of us, and like the doves we moan (we) moan; we wait for justice and there is none, for salva-*

*tion (and) it is far from us.* The Latin poets also speak of the voice of bears and doves as a *gemitus* or groaning. (See above, ch. 38 : 14, and Ezek. 7 : 16.) The same effect which is produced in the first clause by the use of the phrase *all of us*, is produced in the other by the idiomatic repetition of the verb. Here, as in v. 9, we may understand by judgment or justice that which God does by his providential dispensations both to his people and his enemies.

12. *For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us; for our transgressions are with us, and our iniquities—we know them.* The Prophet here begins a general confession in the name of God's people. For the form of expression, compare Ps. 51 : 5 (3).

13. *To transgress and lie against Jehovah, and to turn back from behind our God, to speak oppression and departure, to conceive and utter from the heart words of falsehood.* The specifications of the general charge are now expressed by an unusual succession of infinitives, because the writer wished to concentrate and condense his accusation. This rhetorical effect is materially injured by the substitution of the finite verb. Although by no means equal in conciseness to the Hebrew, our infinitive may be employed as the most exact translation. *Departure* means departure from the right course or the law, i. e. transgression or iniquity.

14. *And judgment is thrust (or driven) back, and righteousness afar off stands; for truth has fallen in the street, and uprightness cannot enter.* The description is now continued in the ordinary form by the finite verb. The word translated *street* properly means an open place or square, especially the space about the gate of an oriental town, where courts were held and other public business was transacted. (See Job 29 : 7. Neh. 8 : 1.) The

present form which seems to be required by our idiom is much less expressive than the preterite and futures of the original. Those interpreters who commonly apply whatever is said of tyranny to the oppression of the Jews in exile are compelled in this case, where the sin is charged upon the Jews themselves, to resort to the imaginary fact of gross misgovernment among the exiles, for the purpose of avoiding the conclusion that the passage has respect to a condition of society like that described in the first chapter.

15. *Then truth was missed (i. e. found wanting), and whoso departed from evil made himself a prey (or was plundered). Ther Jehovah saw and it was evil in his eyes that there was no judgment (or practical justice).* The passive participle is here used with the substantive verb, as the active is in v. 2, to denote anterior habitual action

16. *And he saw that there was no man, and he stood aghast that there was no one interposing ; and his own arm saved for him, and his own righteousness, it upheld him.* The repetition of the words *and he saw* connects this verse in the closest manner with the one before it. What was wanting was not merely a qualified man, but any man whatever, to maintain the cause of Israel and Jehovah. A like absolute expression is employed in 2 Kings 14 : 26, where it is said that Jehovah saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter, and that there was *no helper for Israel*, not merely no sufficient one, but none at all. The desperate nature of the case is then described in terms still stronger and only applicable to Jehovah by the boldest figure. The common version (*wondered*), though substantially correct, is too weak to express the full force of the Hebrew word, which strictly means to be desolate, and is used in reference to persons for the purpose of expressing an extreme degree of horror and astonishment. (See Ps. 143 : 4, and compare the colloquial use of

*désolé* in French.) As applied to God, the term may be considered simply anthropopathic, or as intended to imply a certain sympathetic union with humanity, arising from the mode in which this great intervention was to be accomplished. פָּרַעַת strictly denotes causing to meet or come together, bringing into contact. Hence it is applied to intercessory prayer, and this sense is expressed here by the Chaldee paraphrase. But the context, etymology, and usage, all combine to recommend the wider sense of intervention, interposition, both in word and deed. (See above, on ch. 53 : 12.) The full force of the last clause can be given in English only by the use of the emphatic form *his own*, which is implied but cannot be distinctly expressed in the original except by a periphrasis. To do anything with one's own hand or arm, is an expression frequently used elsewhere to denote entire independence of all foreign aid. (See Judges 7 : 2. 1 Sam. 25 : 26 Ps. 44 : 3. 98 : 1.) The simple and exact translation of the whole clause is, *his arm saved for him*, leaving the object to be gathered from the context, namely, Israel or his people. This same idea is expressed in the last words of the verse, where *his righteousness sustained him* means that he relied or depended upon it exclusively. By righteousness in this case we are not to understand a simple consciousness of doing right, nor the possession of a righteous cause, nor a right to do what he did, all which are modifications of the same essential meaning, nor a zealous love of justice. It is far more satisfactory to give the word its strict and proper sense as denoting an attribute of God, here joined with his power, to show that what are commonly distinguished as his moral and his natural perfections are alike pledged to this great work, and constitute his only reliance for its execution. The extraordinary character of this description, and the very violence which it seems to offer to our ordinary notions of the divine nature, unavoidably prepare the mind for something



higher than the restoration of the Jews from exile, or the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

17. *And he clothed himself with righteousness as a coat of mail, and a helmet of salvation on his head, and he clothed himself with garments of vengeance (for) clothing, and put on, as the cloak (or tunic) jealousy.* The writer here carries out in detail his general declaration that Jehovah undertook the cause of Israel himself, under figures borrowed from the usages of war. The older writers have in vain perplexed themselves with efforts to determine why righteousness is called a breastplate, or salvation a helmet, and to reconcile the variations in Paul's copies of this picture (Eph. 6 : 14-17. 1 Thess. 5 : 8) with the original. That the figures in this case were intended to convey the general idea of martial equipment, may be gathered from the fact that there is no reference whatever to offensive weapons. The particular expressions of the verse need little explanation. The first piece of armour specified is not the breastplate, as the older writers generally render it, perhaps in reference to Eph. 6 : 14, but the habergeon or coat of mail. The first and third terms denote parts of armour properly so called, the second and fourth the dress as distinguished from the armour. The last is either the tunic or the military cloak, often mentioned in the classics as being of a purple colour. The same noun is construed with the same verb in 1 Sam. 28 : 14. The meaning of the whole verse is, that God equipped himself for battle, and arrayed his power, justice, and distinguishing attachment to his people, against their persecutors and oppressors.

18. *According to (their) deeds, accordingly will he repay, wrath to his enemies, (their) desert to his foes, to the isles (their) desert will he repay.* The essential meaning of this verse is evident and undisputed ; but the form of expression in the first clause is

singular, if not anomalous. The difficulty, however, is not exegetical, but purely grammatical, arising from the unexampled use of the preposition *לְ* without an object: *According to their deeds—according to—will he repay.* The latest writers seem to have come back to the simple and obvious supposition of the oldest that it is a case of anomalous ellipsis, the object of the preposition being not expressed, but mentally repeated from the foregoing clause: *According to their deeds, according to (them), he will repay.* (Compare the Hebrew of Ps. 45.) In the mere repetition there is nothing singular, but rather something characteristic of the Prophet. (See above, ch. 52 : 6.) The English Version happily approaches to a perfect reproduction of the Hebrew expression by employing the cognate terms *according* and *accordingly*, which has the advantage of retaining essentially the same term, and yet varying it so as to avoid a grammatical anomaly by which it might have been rendered unintelligible. The only satisfactory solution of the last clause is the one afforded by the hypothesis that the salvation here intended is salvation in the highest sense from sin and all its consequences, and that by Israel and the Isles (or Gentiles) we are to understand the church or people of God, and the world considered as its enemies and his.

19. *And they shall fear from the west the name of Jehovah, and from the rising of the sun his glory ; for it shall come like a straitened stream, the spirit of Jehovah raising a banner in it.* The name and glory of Jehovah are here not only parallels but synonymes, as we learn from other places where the two terms are jointly or severally used to signify the manifested excellence or glorious presence of Jehovah. (See above, ch. 30 : 27. 35 : 2. 40 : 5. 42 : 12.) There is something pleasing, if no more, in the suggestion that the usual order of the east and west (ch. 43 : 5. Mal. 1 : 11) is here reversed, as if to intimate that the diffusion of the truth shall one day take a new direc-

tion, an idea which has been applied specifically to the Christian missions of Great Britain and America, not only to new countries but to Asia, the cradle of the gospel, of the law, and of the human race. The last clause of this verse has been a famous subject of dispute among interpreters, who differ more or less in reference to every word, as well as to the general meaning of the whole. From the combination of these various senses have resulted several distinct interpretations of the whole clause, two of which deserve to be particularly mentioned, as the two between which most writers have been and are still divided. The first of these is the interpretation found, as to its essence, in several of the ancient versions, and especially the Vulgate, *cum venerit quasi fluvius violentus quem Spiritus Domini cogit*. This is substantially retained by Luther and by Lowth, *when he shall come like a river straitened in his course, which a strong wind driveth along*. It is also given by most of the recent German writers, with trivial variations. The other principal interpretation explains the whole to mean that *when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him*. This is the version of the English and Dutch Bibles, and of many eminent interpreters. Between these two main interpretations there are others too numerous to be recited, which agree essentially with one, but in some minor points coincide with the other, or dissent from both. The common version of this vexed clause is entirely defensible, and clearly preferable to the one which has so nearly superseded it. Considering, however, the objections to which both are open, it may be possible to come still nearer to the true sense by combining what is least objectionable in the other expositions. On the whole, the meaning of the verse appears to be, that the ends of the earth shall see and fear the name and glory of Jehovah, because when he approaches as their enemy, it will be like an

overflowing stream (ch. 8 : 7, 8. 28 : 15), in which his Spirit bears aloft the banner or the signal of victory.

20. *Then shall come for Zion a Redeemer, and for the converts of apostasy in Jacob, saith Jehovah.* The expression *converts of transgression* or *apostasy* is perfectly intelligible, though unusual and perhaps without example ; since according to analogy the phrase would seem to mean those relapsing into apostasy, the impossibility of which conspires with the context to determine as the true sense that which every reader spontaneously attaches to it.

21. *And I (or as for me), this (is) my covenant with them, saith Jehovah. My Spirit which is on thee, and my words which I have placed in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith Jehovah, from henceforth and forever (or from now and to eternity).* The absolute pronoun at the beginning is not merely emphatic, but intended to intimate a change of person, God himself re-appearing as the speaker. There may also be allusion to the similar use of the pronoun in the promise to Noah (Gen. 9 : 9), which was ever present to the mind of Jewish readers as the great standing type and model of God's covenants and promises. The only natural antecedent of the pronoun *them* is *the converts of apostasy in Jacob*, to whom the promise in v. 20 is limited. These are then suddenly addressed, or rather the discourse is turned to Israel himself, as the progenitor or as the ideal representative of his descendants, not considered merely as a nation but as a church, and therefore including proselytes as well as natives, Gentiles as well as Jews, nay believing Gentiles to the exclusion of the unbelieving Jews. This is not a mere incidental application of Old Testament expressions to another subject, but a protracted and repeated exposition of the mutual relations of the old and new economy and of the natural and spirit-

ual Israel. To this great body, considered as the Israel of God, the promise now before us is addressed, a promise of continued spiritual influence exerted through the word and giving it effect. The phrase *upon thee* here as elsewhere implies influence from above and has respect to the figure of the Spirit's descending and abiding on the object. The particular mention of the mouth cannot be explained as having reference merely to the reception of the word, in which case the ear would have been more appropriate. The true explanation seems to be that Israel is here, as in many other parts of this great prophecy, regarded not merely as a receiver but as a dispenser of the truth, an office with which as we have seen the Body is invested in connection with the Head, and in perpetual subordination to him. Israel, as well as the Messiah, and in due dependence on him, was to be the light of the Gentiles, the reclainer of apostate nations, and in this high mission and vocation was to be sustained and prospered by the never-failing presence of the Holy Spirit, as the author and the finisher of all revelation. (See above, ch. 42 : 1-7. 44 : 1-3. 49 : 1-9. 51 : 16. 54 : 3. 56 : 6-8. 58 : 12, and compare Jer. 31 : 31. Joel 2 : 28. Ezek. 36 : 27. 39 : 29 )

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## CHAPTER LX.

HAVING repeatedly and fully shown that the national pre-eminence of Israel was not to be perpetual, that the loss of it was the natural consequence and righteous retribution of iniquity, and that this loss did not involve the destruction of the true church or spiritual Israel, the Prophet now proceeds to show that to the latter the approaching change would be a glorious and blessed one. He accordingly describes it as a new

and divine light rising upon Zion, v. 1. He contrasts it with the darkness of surrounding nations, v. 2. Yet these are not excluded from participation in the light, v. 3. The elect in every nation are the children of the church, and shall be gathered to her, vs. 4, 5. On one side, he sees the oriental caravans and flocks approaching, vs. 6, 7. On the other, the commercial fleets of western nations, vs. 8, 9. What seemed to be rejection is in fact the highest favour, v. 10. The glory of the true church is her freedom from local and national restrictions, v. 11. None are excluded from her pale but those who exclude themselves and thereby perish, v. 12. External nature shall contribute to her splendour, v. 13. Her very enemies shall do her homage, v. 14. Instead of being cast off, she is glorified forever, v. 15. Instead of being identified with one nation, she shall derive support from all, v. 16. All that is changed in her condition shall be changed for the better, v. 17. The evils of her former state are done away, v. 18. Even some of its advantages are now superfluous, v. 19. What remains shall no longer be precarious, v. 20. The splendour of this new dispensation is a moral and a spiritual splendour, but attended by external safety and protection, vs. 21, 22. All this shall certainly and promptly come to pass at the appointed time, v. 22.

Here as elsewhere the new dispensation is contrasted as a whole with that before it. We are not therefore to seek the fulfilment of the prophecy in any one period of history exclusively, nor to consider actual corruptions and afflictions as inconsistent with the splendid vision of the New Jerusalem presented to the Prophet, not in its successive stages, but in one grand panoramic view.

1. *Arise, be light ; for thy light is come, and the glory of Jehovah has risen upon thee.* These are the words of Isaiah, speaking in the name of God to Zion or Jerusalem, not merely as a



city, nor even as a capital, but as the centre, representative, and symbol of the church or chosen people. A precisely analogous example is afforded by the use of the name Rome in modern religious controversy, not to denote the city or the civil government as such, but the Roman Catholic Church, with all its parts, dependencies, and interests. The one usage is as natural and intelligible as the other; and if no one hesitates to say that Newman has apostatized to Rome, or that his influence has added greatly to the strength of Rome in England, no one can justly treat it as a wresting of the Prophet's language to explain it in precisely the same manner. The object of address is here so plain that several of the ancient versions actually introduce the name Jerusalem. The common version *shine* is defective only in not showing the affinity between the verb and noun which is so marked in the original. The English *risen* is also less expressive, because more ambiguous and vague, than the Hebrew verb, which means not to rise in general, but to rise above the horizon, to appear. The *glory of Jehovah* is his manifested presence, with allusion to the cloudy pillar and the Shechinah. *Upon thee* represents Jerusalem as exposed and subjected to the full blaze of this rising light. Light, and especially the light imparted by the divine presence, is a common figure for prosperity, both temporal and spiritual. This is a direct continuation of the foregoing context, and what follows is distinguished from what goes before only by the increasing prominence with which the normal and ideal perfection of the church is set forth, as the prophecy draws near to a conclusion.

2. *For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and a gloom the nations, and upon thee shall Jehovah rise, and his glory upon thee shall be seen.* The general description in the first verse is now amplified and carried out into detail. Of this specification the verse before us contains only the beginning. To

regard it as the whole would be to make the Prophet say the very opposite of what he does say. The perfection of the glory promised to the church is not to arise from its contrast with the darkness of the world around it, but from the diffusion of its light until that darkness disappears. The Prophet here reverts for a moment to the previous condition of the world, in order to describe with more effect the glorious change to be produced. He is not therefore to be understood as saying that Zion shall be glorious because while the nations are in darkness she is to enjoy exclusive light, but because the light imparted to her first shall draw the nations to her. *Jehovah* and his *glory*, which are jointly said to rise in the preceding verse, are here divided between two parallel members, and the rising predicated of the first alone.

3. *And nations shall walk in thy light, and kings in the brightness of thy rising*, i. e. thy rising brightness, or the bright light which shall rise upon thee. The common version, *to thy light*, may seem at first sight more exact than the one here given, but is really less so. The Hebrew preposition here used does not correspond to our *to* as a particle of motion or direction, but expresses relation in the widest and most general manner. It is often therefore interchanged with other particles, and *to* among the rest, but is not to be so translated here or in any other case without necessity. In this case it seems to mean that they shall walk with reference to the light in question, which in English may be best expressed by *in*, but not as a literal translation. The sense thus yielded is in some respects better than the other, as suggesting the idea not of mere attraction but of general diffusion. By light we are then to understand the radiation from the luminous centre and not merely the centre itself. This explanation of the verse is given by the best of the modern interpreters. Some of these, however, arbitrarily apply it to the restoration of the

Jews from exile, who were to be accompanied by heathen kings as their guides and protectors. As a prophecy this never was fulfilled. As a visionary anticipation it could never have been entertained by a contemporary writer, such as these interpreters suppose the author of the book to be.

4. *Lift up thine eyes round about* (i. e. in all directions) *and see ; all of them are gathered, they come to thee, thy sons from afar shall come, and thy daughters at the side shall be borne.* See ch 43 : 5-7 and 49 : 18-23. Those who confine these prophecies to the Babylonish exile, understand this as describing the agency of heathen states and sovereigns in the restoration. But in this, as in the parallel passages, there is, by a strange coincidence, no word or phrase implying restoration or return, but the image is evidently that of enlargement and accession ; the children thus brought to Zion being not those whom she had lost, but such as she had never before known, as is evident from ch. 49 : 21.

5. *Then shalt thou see (or fear) and brighten up (or overflow), and thy heart shall throb and swell ; because (or when) the abundance of the sea shall be turned upon thee, the strength of nations shall come unto thee.* This translation exhibits the points of agreement as well as of difference among interpreters in reference to this verse. All agree that it describes a great and joyful change to be produced by the accession of the gentiles to the church or chosen people, and the effect of this enlargement on the latter. The form of the first verb is ambiguous. If rendered *fear*, it may denote the painful sensation which often attends sudden joy, and which is certainly described in the next clause. A fine parallel is quoted from Lucretius :

His tibi me rebus quaedam divina voluptas  
Percipit atque horror.

The other meaning is sanctioned by all the ancient versions, and

preferred by many of the best interpreters. *Upon* can hardly be a simple substitute for *to*, but is rather intended to suggest the same idea as when we speak of gifts or favours being showered or lavished *on* a person. This force of the particle is well expressed in Lowth's translation, *when the riches of the sea shall be poured in upon thee*, but with too little regard to the proper meaning of the Hebrew verb. The next clause is a repetition of the same thought, but without a figure. The most natural interpretation of the verse is that which makes it a promise of indefinite enlargement, comprehending both the persons and the riches of the nations. Even literally understood, the promise is intelligible and most welcome to the philanthropic Christian, as affording means for the diffusion of the truth and the conversion of the world.

6. *A flood of camels shall cover thee, young camels (or dromedaries) of Midian and Ephah, all of them from Sheba shall come, gold and incense shall they bear, and the praises of Jehovah as good news.* This last form of expression is adopted in order to convey the full force of the Hebrew verb, which does not mean simply to announce or even to announce with joy, but to announce glad tidings (See above, on ch. 40 : 9.) Retaining this sense here, the word would seem to signify not the direct praise of God, but the announcement of the fact that others praised him, and the messengers would be described as bringing to Jerusalem the news of the conversion of their people. The literal translation of the first word throws light upon the phrase *shall cover thee*, a term elsewhere applied to water (e. g. ch. 11 : 9), and suggesting here the poetical idea of a city not merely thronged but flooded with Arabian caravans. The camel has been always so peculiarly associated with the Arabs that they are described by Strabo as *σκηνίται καμηλοβοσκοί*. They are here, according to Isaiah's practice, represented by a group of ancestral names. Ephah was the

eldest son of Midian, who was himself the son of Abraham by Keturah and the brother of Jokshan the father of Sheba. (Gen. 25 : 1-4.) The first two represent northern and central Arabia, the third Arabia Felix, so called by the old geographers because of the rich products which it furnished to the northern traders, either from its own resources or as an entrepôt of Indian commerce. The queen of this country, by whom Solomon was visited, brought with her gold, gems, and spices in abundance (1 Kings 10 : 2), and we read elsewhere of its frankincense (Jer. 6 : 20), its Phœnician commerce (Ezek. 27 : 29), and its caravans (Job 6 : 19), while those of Midian are mentioned even in the patriarchal history (Gen. 37 : 28). It is a common opinion of interpreters that this verse represents the east as joining in the acts of homage and of tribute which the one before it had ascribed to the west; but it may well be doubted whether this distinctive meaning can be put upon the terms *sea* and *nations* there employed, and the antithesis would hardly be in keeping with another which appears to be designed between these two verses and the eighth, as will be explained below.

7. *All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered for thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister to thee, they shall ascend with good-will (or acceptably) my altar, and my house of beauty I will beautify.* To the traders of Arabia with their caravans and precious wares he now adds her shepherds with their countless flocks. Kedar, the second son of Ishmael (Gen. 25 : 13), who represents Arabia in ch. 21 : 16 and 42 : 11, is here joined for the same purpose with his elder brother *Nebaioth*, obviously identical with the *Nabataei*, the name given to the people of Arabia Petraea by Strabo and Diodorus Siculus, who represent them as possessed of no wealth except flocks and herds, in which they were extremely rich. Ezekiel also speaks of Tyre as trading with *Arabia and all the chiefs of Kedar in lambs and rams and goats*

(Ezek. 27 : 21.) These are here described as gathered in one vast flock to Jerusalem. or rather *for* her, i. e. for her use or service, which agrees best with what follows, and with the usage of the Hebrew preposition. They are then, by a bold and striking figure, represented as offering themselves, which is first expressed by the general term *serve* or *minister*, and then more unequivocally by declaring that they shall themselves ascend the altar.

8. *Who are these that fly as a cloud and as doves to their windows?* The ships expressly mentioned in the next verse are here described in their first appearance at a distance, resembling with their outspread sails and rapid course a fleecy cloud driven by the wind, and a flight of doves returning to their young. Both comparisons are elsewhere used as here to indicate rapidity of motion. (Job 30 : 15. Ps. 55 : 6. Hos. 11 : 11. Jer. 4 : 13.) The last word in Hebrew denotes *lattices* or *latticed windows*.

9. *Because for me the isles are waiting (or must wait), and the ships of Tarshish in the first place, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, for the name of Jehovah thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel, because he has glorified thee.* This verse contains a virtual though not a formal answer to the question in the one before it. As if he had said, Wonder not that these are seen approaching, for the whole world is only awaiting my command to bring thy sons, etc. For the true sense of *isles* see above on ch. 42 : 4, and for ships of Tarshish. It is an interesting question, what we are to understand in this connection by the *ships of Tarshish*, to which such extraordinary prominence is given in the work of restoration. Here, as in many former instances, the writer does not even accidentally use any term explicitly denoting restoration or return, but only such as are appropriate to mere accession and increase *ab extra*. It cannot therefore be absurd, even if it is erroneous, to apply



what is here said to the growth of the true Israel or chosen people by the calling of the gentiles, with particular allusion to the wealth of the commercial nations, from among whom the elect of God, the sons of Zion, when they come to the embraces of their unknown mother, shall come bringing their silver and gold with them.

10. *And strangers shall build thy walls, and their kings shall serve thee; for in my wrath I smote thee, and in my favour I have had mercy on thee.* For the true sense of the phrase translated *strangers*, see above, on ch. 56 : 3; and with the last clause compare ch. 54 : 7, 8. The *for* relates to the whole of that clause taken together, not to the first member by itself. It was not because God had been angry, but because he had been angry and relented, that they were to be thus favoured. (See above, on ch. 12 : 1.) The Prophet here foretells the agency of strangers or new converts in promoting the safety and prosperity of Israel, under figures borrowed from the old economy, and implying a vicissitude or alternation of distress and joy, such as Isaiah frequently exhibits. The building of the walls here mentioned is the same as that in Ps. 51 : 20, (18,) and 147 : 2, where it is no more to be literally understood than the captivity of Zion in Ps. 14 : 7, or that of Job in ch. 42 : 10.

11. *And thy gates shall open (or be open) continually, day and night they shall not be shut, to bring into thee the strength of nations and their kings led (captive or in triumph).* According to some writers, there is here a resumption of the figures in v. 6, and the gates are represented as kept open day and night by the perpetual influx of Arabian caravans. But without going back to the peculiar imagery of that verse, we may understand the one before us as relating to the influx of strangers and new converts generally. The two ideas expressed are those of unobstructed access and undisturbed tranquillity. Upon this

verse, perhaps combined with Zeeh. 14 : 7, is founded that beautiful and grand description, *the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day, for there shall be no night there* (Rev. 21 : 25). *Strength* has the same ambiguity or latitude of meaning as in v. 5. The sense of wealth or treasure is preferred by most of the late writers, but some understand it to mean military force. Better than either, because comprehending both, is the Latin version *copia*, to which we have no exact equivalent in English. The meaning of the last clause is that earthly sovereigns must unite in this adhesion to the true religion either willingly or by compulsion.

12. *For the nation and the kingdom which will not serve thee shall perish, and the nations shall be desolated, desolated.* Similar threatenings are found in Zechariah 12 : 2, 3, and 14 : 17, in the last of which places there is a specific threat of drought, as the appointed punishment. This has led some writers to explain the last verb here as meaning to be utterly dried up or parched. But in ch. 37 : 18, above, it is applied to nations in the general sense of desolation. The *for* at the beginning of the verse is commonly explained as introducing a reason for the confluence of strangers just before predicted, namely, the desire of escaping this destruction; but it may as well be understood to give a reason for the promise of increase in general. The gates of Zion shall be crowded, because all shall enter into them but those who are to perish. *The nations* in the last clause may mean the nations just described, or, as the common version expresses it, *those nations*. But it may also mean, perhaps more naturally, those who still continue to be gentiles, heathen, by refusing to unite themselves with Israel. The threatening in this verse is a very serious one, however understood; but it is also very strange and unaccountable if understood as meaning that all nations shall be utterly destroyed which will not serve the Jews when restored to their own country. Even if we give

to *serve* the mitigated sense of showing favour and assisting, there is still something almost revolting in the penalty annexed to the omission; how much more if we understand it as denoting actual subjection and hard bondage. The whole is rendered clear by the assumption that the threatening was intended to apply, in its most obvious and strongest sense, to all those nations which refuse to be connected with the Church or Israel of God.

13. *The glory of Lebanon to thee shall come, cypress, plane, and box together, to adorn the place of my sanctuary, and the place of my feet I will honour.* The glory of Lebanon is its cedars. For the other trees here mentioned, see above, on ch. 41 : 19, where, as here, they are merely representatives of ornamental forest-trees in general. *The place of my sanctuary* has been generally understood to mean the sanctuary itself; but several of the latest writers understand by it Jerusalem, as being the place where the temple was erected. The same sense is put by some writers on *the place of my feet*, that is, the place where I habitually stand or walk. (Ezek. 43 : 7.) The older writers generally understand by it the ark of the covenant, considered as the footstool of Jehovah (1 Chron. 28 : 2. Ps. 99 : 5. 132 : 7) when enthroned upon or between the cherubim (ch. 37 : 16. Ps. 80 : 1). In favour of the wider sense is the analogy of ch. 66 : 1, where the same description is applied to the whole earth, but in reference to heaven as the throne of God. Another topic upon which interpreters have been divided, is the question whether the adorning mentioned here is that of cultivated grounds by living trees, or that of buildings by the use of the choicest kinds of timber. The latter opinion has most commonly prevailed, but the other is far more pleasing in itself and more in keeping with the poetical tone of the whole context. In either case the meaning of the figure is that the earthly residence of God shall be invested with the most attractive forms of beauty.

14. *Then shall come to thee bending the sons of thy oppressors, then shall bow down to the soles of thy feet all thy despisers, and shall call thee the City of Jehovah, Zion the holy (place) of Israel (or the Zion of the Holy One of Israel).* For the same ideas and expressions, see above, ch. 45 : 14 and 49 : 23. The act described is the oriental prostration as a sign of the profoundest reverence. The sons are mentioned either for the purpose of contrasting the successive generations more emphatically, or as a mere oriental idiom without distinctive meaning. In favour of the latter supposition is the circumstance that it is wanting in the other clause, where the despisers are themselves represented as doing the same thing with the sons of the oppressors. These humbled enemies are represented as acknowledging the claim of Zion to be recognized as the holy place and dwelling of Jehovah. On the supposition hitherto assumed as the basis of the exposition, this verse simply means that the enemies of the Church shall recognize her in her true relation to her divine Head.

15. *Instead of thy being forsaken and hated and with none passing (through thee), I will place thee for a boast of perpetuity, a joy of age and age (i. e. forever).* The first word may express either simply a change of condition (*whereas*), or the reason of the change (*because*), or the further idea of equitable compensation. The *and* at the beginning of the second clause in Hebrew is commonly regarded as the sign of the apodosis, and as such cannot be expressed in English.

16. *And thou shalt suck the milk of nations, and the breast of kings shalt thou suck, and thou shalt know that I, Jehovah, am thy saviour, and (that) thy redeemer (is) the Mighty One of Jacob.* All interpreters agree in applying this verse to the influx of wealth and power and whatever else the kings and nations of the earth can contribute to the progress of the true religion

The figure is derived from Deut. 33 : 19, *they shall suck the abundance of the seas*. The catachresis in the second clause is not a mere rhetorical blunder, but an example of the sense overmastering the style, a license the occasional use of which is characteristic of a bold and energetic writer. It also serves the useful purpose of showing how purely tropical the language is. Each member of the last clause contains a subject and a predicate, and therefore a complete proposition. The sense is not merely that Jehovah is the Mighty One of Jacob, but that the Mighty God of Jacob is Israel's redeemer, and the self-existent everlasting God his saviour.

17. *Instead of brass (or copper) I will bring gold, and instead of iron I will bring silver, and instead of wood brass, and instead of stones iron, and I will place (or make) thy government peace and thy rulers righteousness.* The thought which is naturally suggested by the words is that all things shall be changed for the better. The change described is not a change in kind, i. e. from bad to good, but in degree, i. e. from good to better; because the same things which appear to be rejected in the first clause are expressly promised in the second. See a similar gradation in ch. 30 : 26. Zech. 14 : 20. 1 Cor. 3 : 12. 15 : 41. The last clause resolves the figure into literal expressions, and thus shows that the promise has respect not to money but to moral advantages. מִשְׁפָּט properly means office, magistracy, government, here put for those who exercise it, like nobility, ministry, and other terms in English. (Compare the Hebrew of Ezek. 9 : 1. 2 Kings 11 : 18.) מְשִׁיבִים, which has commonly a bad sense, is here used for magistrates or rulers in general, for the purpose of suggesting, that instead of tyrants or exactors the people should now be under equitable government.

18. *There shall no more be heard violence in thy land, desolation and ruin in thy borders (or within thy bounds); and thou*

*shalt call salvation thy walls, and thy gates praise.* The most natural explanation of the last clause is that which makes it mean that the walls shall afford safety (ch. 26 : 1) and the gates occasion of praise. Some understand by praise the praise of God for her continued safety ; others the praise or fame of her defences, considered either as arising from victorious resistance to assault, or as preventing it. Thou shalt call, as in many other cases, means, thou shalt have a right and reason so to call them. With this verse compare ch. 65 : 19-25.

19. *No more shall be to thee the sun for a light by day, and for brightness the moon shall not shine to thee, and Jehovah shall become thy everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.* Some regard this merely as a figurative promise of prosperity, of which light is a natural and common emblem. Others understand it as a promise of God's residence among his people, clothed in such transcendent brightness as to make the light of the sun and the moon useless. The true sense of the figures seems to be, that all natural sources of illumination shall be swallowed up in the clear manifestation of the presence, power, and will of God. With this verse compare Rev. 21 : 23. 22 : 5.

20. *Thy sun shall set no more, and thy moon shall not be withdrawn ; for Jehovah shall be unto thee for an eternal light, and completed the days of thy mourning.* There is no need of supposing any want of consistency between this verse and that before it, nor even that the Prophet gives a new turn to his metaphor. *Thy sun shall set no more* is evidently tantamount to saying, thou shalt no more have a sun that sets or a moon that withdraws herself, because etc. The active verb נִסָּח is used in the same way by Joel, where he says that the stars *withdraw their brightness*, i. e. cease to shine. The expression is generic, and may comprehend all failure or decrease of light, whether by setting, waning, or eclipse, or by the temporary intervention



of a cloud. The last words of this verse furnish a key to the whole description, by identifying joy with light, and grief with darkness. Compare with this verse ch. 25 : 8. Zech. 14 : 7. Rev. 7 : 16. 21 : 4 ; and with the phrase, *days of mourning*, Gen. 27 : 41.

21. *And thy people, all of them righteous, forever shall inherit the earth, the branch (or shoot) of my planting, the work of my hands, to glorify myself (or to be glorified).* Compare ch. 4 : 2. 33 : 24. 35 : 8. 52 : 1. Rev. 21 : 7, 27. The first clause may also be read as two distinct propositions, *thy people all of them are (or shall be) righteous, forever they shall inherit the earth.* According to the literal interpretation, so called, this is a promise that the Jews shall possess the Holy Land forever. But even granting *land* to be a more literal and exact translation, which it is not, still the usage of the Scriptures has attached to this prophetic formula a much higher meaning, the possession of the land being just such a type or symbol of the highest future blessings as the exodus from Egypt is of ultimate deliverance, or the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah of sudden, condign, irretrievable destruction. But in favour of the wider version, *earth*, is the analogy of ch. 49 : 8, where Israel is represented as occupying and restoring the desolate heritages of the whole earth. The dependence of God's people on himself for the origin and sustentation of their spiritual life is forcibly expressed by the figure of a plant which he has planted (Ps. 92 : 13. Matt. 15 : 13. John 15 : 1, 2), and by that of a work which he has wrought (ch. 29 : 23. 43 : 7), in reference to the last of which the Apostle says (Eph. 2 : 10), *we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them* ; and in reference to the first, our Lord himself says (John 15 : 8), *herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples* ; and again, with an entire change of figure (Matt. 5 : 16), *let your*

*light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.* The same ultimate design is set forth in the words of the verse before us, which predicts the elevation of the church to its normal or ideal state, a change of which we may already see the rudiments, however far we may be yet from its final consummation.

22. *The little one shall become a thousand, and the small one a strong nation ; I, Jehovah, in its time will hasten it.* This verse is simply a description of increase, like that in ch. 26 : 15. 49 : 19, 20. etc The pronouns in the last c'ause refer to the whole preceding series of prophecies. (Compare ch. 43 : 13. 46 : 11.) The *his* in the common version is equivalent to *its* in modern English, a possessive form apparently unknown to the translators of the Bible. *I will hasten it* has reference to the time ordained for the event, or may denote the suddenness of its occurrence, without regard to its remoteness or the length of the intervening period. (See above, on ch. 13 : 22.) The Jerusalem or Zion of this passage is not the primitive or apostolic church, to which the description is in many points inapplicable ; whereas it is perfectly appropriate to the New Jerusalem, the Christian Church, not as it was, or is, or will be at any period of its history exclusively, but viewed in reference to the whole course of that history, and in contrast with the many disadvantages and hardships of the old economy.

## CHAPTER LXI.

AFTER describing the new condition of the Church, he again introduces the great personage by whom the change is to be brought about. His mission and its object are described by himself in vs. 1-3. Its grand result shall be the restoration of a ruined world, v. 4. The church, as a mediator between God and the revolted nations, shall enjoy their service and support, vs. 5, 6. The shame of God's people shall be changed to honour, v. 7. His righteousness is pledged to this effect v. 8. The church, once restricted to a single nation, shall be recognized and honoured among all, v. 9. He triumphs in the prospect of the universal spread of truth and righteousness, vs. 10, 11.

1. *The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah (is) upon me, because Jehovah hath anointed me to bring good news to the humble, he hath sent me to bind up the broken in heart, to proclaim to captives freedom, and to the bound open opening* (of the eyes or of the prison-doors). Uncction in the Old Testament is not a mere sign of consecration to office, whether that of a Prophet, Priest, or King (1 Kings 19: 16 Lev. 8: 12 1 Kings 1: 39), but the symbol of spiritual influences, by which the recipient was both qualified and designated for his work. (See 1 Sam. 10: 1, 6. 16: 13.) The office here described approaches nearest to the prophetic. The specific functions mentioned have all occurred and been explained before. (See above, on ch. 42: 1-7. 48: 16. 49: 1-9. 50: 4. 51: 16) The proclamation of liberty has reference to the year of jubilee under the Mosaic law (Lev. 25: 10, 13. 27: 24. Jer. 34: 8-10), which is expressly called the year of liberty or liberation by Ezekiel (46: 17). For reasons which have been already given, the only natural sense which can be

put upon the last words is that of spiritual blindness and illumination. (See above, on ch. 42 : 7. 50 : 10.) With this question is connected another as to the person here introduced as speaking. Many orthodox interpreters regard the question as decided by our Lord himself in the synagogue at Nazareth, when, after reading this verse and a portion of the next from *the book of the Prophet Isaiah*, he began to say unto them, *this day is the scripture fulfilled in your ears.* (Luke 4 : 16-22.) The brevity of this discourse, compared with the statement which immediately follows, that *the people bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth*, and connected with the singular expression that *he began* thus to say unto them, makes it probable that we have only the beginning or a summary of what the Saviour said on that occasion. That the whole is not recorded may however be regarded as a proof that his discourse contained no interpretation of the place before us which may not be gathered from the few words left on record, or from the text and context of the prophecy itself. Now it must be admitted that the words of Christ just quoted do not necessarily import that he is the direct and only subject of the prophecy ; for even if the subject were Isaiah, or the Prophets as a class, or Israel, yet if at the same time the effects foretold were coming then to pass, our Lord might say, *this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.* Upon this ground some adopt the application to Isaiah, without disowning the authority of Christ as an interpreter of prophecy. But this restriction of the passage is at variance with what we have already seen to be the true sense of the parallel places (ch. 42 : 1-7 and ch. 49 : 1-9), where the form of expression is the same, and where all agree that the same speaker is brought forward. If it has been concluded on sufficient grounds that the ideal person there presented is the Messiah, the same conclusion cannot, without arbitrary violence, be avoided here, and thus the prophecy itself interprets our Lord's words instead of being interpreted by

them. This in the present case is more satisfactory, because it cuts off all objection drawn from the indefinite character of his expressions. At the same time, and by parity of reasoning, a subordinate and secondary reference to Israel as a representative of the Messiah, and to the Prophets as in some sense the representatives of Israel as well as of Messiah in their prophetic character, must be admitted; and thus we are brought again to Christ as the last and the ideal Prophet, and to the ground assumed by the profound and far-seeing Calvin, for which he has been severely censured even by Calvinistic writers, and which has been called a concession to the Jews instead of a concession to candour, faith, good taste, and common sense.

2. *To proclaim a year of favour for Jehovah and a day of vengeance for our God, to comfort all mourners.* Clement of Alexandria inferred from the use of the word *year* in this verse that our Lord's public ministry was only one year in duration, a conclusion wholly irreconcilable with the gospel history. The expression is a poetical equivalent to *day*, suggested by the previous allusion to the year of jubilee. The same two words occur as parallels in ch. 34 : 8. 63 : 4, while in ch. 49 : 8 we have the general expression *time of favour*. For the meaning of the last words of the verse, see above, on ch. 49 : 13 and 57 : 18. They may either be descriptive of sufferers, as the persons needing consolation, or of penitents, as those who shall alone receive it.

3. *To clothe Zion's mourners, to give them a crown instead of ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, a garment of praise for a faint spirit; and it shall be called to them (or they shall be called) the oaks of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah (i. e. planted by Jehovah) to glorify himself.* The construction seems to be interrupted and resumed, a practice not unfrequent with Isaiah. Of the many senses which might here be attached to the first

verb, the most appropriate is that of *putting on*, as applied to dress, though with another particle, in Gen. 37 : 34. 41 : 42, and often elsewhere. The English version has *appoint*, which is justified by usage, but less suitable in this case than the one above proposed. By the repetition of the word *mourners*, this verse is wrought into the foregoing context in a mode of which we have had several examples. (See above, on ch. 60 : 15.) *Zion's mourners* may be simply those who mourn in Zion, or those who mourn for her (ch. 66 : 10); but as these ideas are not incompatible, both may be included. (Compare ch. 57 : 18. 60 : 20.) That unguents were not used by mourners but rejoicers, may be learned from a comparison of 2 Sam. 14 : 2 with Ps. 23 : 5. The mixture not only of metaphors but also of literal and figurative language in this verse, shows clearly that it has respect to spiritual not external changes. (Compare ch. 44 : 4. 60 : 21.)

4. *And they shall build up the ruins of antiquity, the desolations of the ancients they shall raise, and shall renew the cities of ruin* (i. e. ruined cities), *the desolations of age and age*. Both the thought and language of this verse have been explained already. (See above, on ch. 49 : 8. 54 : 3. 58 : 12.) The verb *renew* is applied as in 2 Chr. 15 : 8. 24 : 4.

5. *Then shall stand strangers and feed your flocks, and the children of outland (shall be) your ploughmen and your vine-dressers*. As to the meaning of this prophecy, interpreters are much divided. Some seem to take it in the strictest sense as a promise that the heathen should be slaves to the Jews. (See above, on ch. 14 : 2.) Others understand it as meaning that the Jews should confine themselves to spiritual services, and leave mere secular pursuits to the gentiles. Nearly allied to this is the explanation that the Jews and gentiles are described as sustaining the relation of priests and laymen to each other.



Some qualify it still more by describing the relation to be that of the Levites to the other tribes, and even this restricted by the promise in ch. 66 : 21. But that verse shows conclusively that no exclusive promise of Levitical or sacerdotal rank to the Jews, as distinguished from the gentiles, can be here intended. This is confirmed by the language of Peter, who applies the promise of the next verse to the Christian church (1 Pet. 2 : 5). The only way in which all these seeming discrepancies can be reconciled, is by supposing, as we have done hitherto, that even in Ex. 19 : 6 the promise is addressed to Israel not as a nation but a church ; so that when the Jewish people ceased to bear this character, they lost all claim to the fulfilment of the promise, which is still in force and still enures to the benefit of those to whom it was originally given, namely, the Israel of God, that is to say, his church or chosen people. That the holders of this office might in strict accordance with the usage of Scripture and of this book be described as shepherds, husbandmen, and vinedressers, may be seen by a comparison of ch 3 : 14. 5 : 1. 11 : 6. 27 : 2. 30 : 23, 24. 40 : 11 with Acts 20 : 28. 1 Cor. 3 : 9. 9 : 7, and with the imagery of our Saviour's parables. It does not follow necessarily, however, that the office here assigned to strangers and foreigners is that of spiritual guides, much less that they are doomed to a degrading servitude. The simplest explanation of the verse is that which understands it as descriptive not of subjugation but of intimate conjunction, as if he had said, those who are now strangers and foreigners shall yet be sharers in your daily occupations and intrusted with your dearest interests. By strangers we are then to understand not Gentiles as opposed to Jews, but all who have been aliens from the covenant of mercy and the church of God.

6. *And ye (or more emphatically, as for you), the priests of Jehovah shall ye be called, the ministers of our God shall be said to*

*you (or of you), the strength of nations shall ye eat, and in thier glory shall ye substitute yourselves* (or into their glory shall ye enter by exchange). Most of the earlier writers agree substantially in the version of the last word, which they regard as an orthographical variation of *יְהַאֲמִירוּ* in Ps. 94 : 4, where it seems to denote talking of one's self, and, by a natural transition, glorying or boasting. But all the latest writers have gone back to the explanation of the word as denoting 'mutual exchange or substitution.' This word is important as determining the sense, not only of the whole verse, but of that before it, by requiring both to be considered as descriptive not of exaltation and subjection, but of mutual exchange, implying intimate association. Some, it is true, attempt to carry out the first idea even here, by making this last word denote an absolute exclusive substitution, i. e. the dispossession of the Gentiles by the Jews. But the context, etymology, and usage, all combine to recommend the idea of reciprocal exchange or mutual substitution. Interpreters, in seeking a factitious antithesis between the verses, have entirely overlooked the natural antithesis between the clauses of this one verse. They have supposed the contrast intended to be that between servitude and priesthood: 'they shall be your servants, and ye shall be their priests.' But we have seen already that the fifth verse cannot, in consistency with ch. 66 : 10, denote anything but intimate conjunction and participation. The true antithesis is: 'ye shall be their priests, and they shall be your purveyors; you shall supply their spiritual wants, and they shall supply your temporal wants' This explanation of the verse, to which we have been naturally led by philological induction and the context, coincides, in a manner too remarkable to be considered accidental, with the words of Paul in writing to the Romans of the contribution made by the churches of Macedonia and Achaia for the poor saints at Jerusalem. *It hath pleased them verily, and their debtors they are* (i. e. they have chosen to do it, and indeed

were bound to do it); *for if the gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.* (Rom. 15 : 27.) This may seem, however, to determine the object of address to be the Jews; but no such inference can fairly be deduced from the words of the Apostle, who is only making one specific application of the general truth taught by the Prophet. What was true of the gentile converts then, in relation to the Jewish Christians as their mother-church, is no less true of the heathen now, or even of the converted Jews, in reference to the Christians who impart the gospel to them. The essential idea in both places is, that the church, the chosen people, or the Israel of God, is charged with the duty of communicating spiritual things to those without, and entitled in return to an increase of outward strength from those who thus become incorporated with it. But it is not merely in this lower sense that the people of God are, in the law and the gospel, as well as in the prophets, represented as the ministers and priests of God. Not only as instructors and reclaimers of the unbelieving world do they enjoy this sacred dignity, but also as the only representatives of their Great High Priest, in him and through him possessing free access to the fountain of salvation and the throne of grace. (Heb. 4 : 14-16.) In this respect, as in every other which concerns the method of salvation and access to God, there is no distinction of Jew and Gentile, any more than of Greek and barbarian, male and female, bond and free; but all are Christ's, and Christ is God's, and all alike are priests and ministers of God.

7. *Instead of your shame (ye shall have) double, and (instead of their) confusion they shall celebrate their portion; therefore in their land shall they inherit double, everlasting joy shall be to them.* It is not impossible that the Prophet has in view the same two classes who are distinctly mentioned in the preceding verses.

*Double* is used indefinitely to denote a large proportion. Compare ch. 40 : 2.

8. *For I am Jehovah, loving justice, hating (that which is) taken away unjustly, and I will give their hire truly, and an everlasting covenant I strike for them.* This verse is commonly applied to the violence practised upon Israel by the Babylonians. (Compare ch. 42 : 24.) It is rather an enunciation of the general truth, that the divine justice renders absolutely necessary the destruction of his obstinate enemies, and the deliverance of his people from oppression. (Compare 2 Thess. 1 : 6-8.)

9. *Then shall be known among the nations their seed, and their issue in the midst of the peoples. All seeing them shall acknowledge them, that they are a seed Jehovah has blessed.* The first clause means that they shall be known among the nations in their true character as a seed or race highly favoured of Jehovah. *Issue* means progeny or offspring, as in ch. 48 : 19. In order to apply this to the restored Jews, we must depart from the literal and obvious import of *among* and *in the midst*, and understand them as denoting merely that they shall be heard of; for how can they be said to be among and in the midst of the nations at the very time when they are gathered from them to their own land. And yet the whole connection seems to favour the first meaning, and to show that they are here described as being scattered through the nations, and there recognized by clear distinctive marks as being God's peculiar people, just as the Jews took knowledge of Peter and John that they had been with Jesus. (Acts 4 : 13.) The later writers liken the construction to that in Gen. 1 : 4, God saw the light that it was good; not simply saw that the light was good, but saw the light itself, and in so doing saw that it was good. So here the meaning is not merely that all seeing them shall acknowl

edge that they are a seed, etc., but that all seeing them shall recognize them, by recognizing the effects and evidences of the divine blessing. The ellipsis of the relative is the same in Hebrew and colloquial English. The true application of the verse is to the Israel of God in its diffusion among all the nations of the earth, who shall be constrained by what they see of their spirit, character, and conduct, to acknowledge that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed. The glorious fulfilment of this promise in its original and proper sense, may be seen already in the influence exerted by the eloquent example of the missionary on the most ignorant and corrupted heathen, without waiting for the future restoration of the Jews to the land of their fathers.

10. (*I will*) joy, *I will joy in Jehovah, let my soul exult in my God ; for he hath clothed me with garments of salvation, a mantle of righteousness has he put on me, as the bridegroom adjusts his priestly crown, and as the bride arrays her jewels.* These are the words of the same speaker who appears at the beginning of this chapter and the next. The reference in the last clause is no doubt to the sacerdotal mitre, which was probably regarded as a model of ornamental head-dress, and to which the Hebrew word is explicitly applied (Ex. 39 : 28. Ez. 44 : 18). Salvation and righteousness are here combined, as often elsewhere, to denote the cause and the effect, the justice of God as displayed in the salvation of his people. (See v. 8, above.) Or righteousness may be referred to the people, as denoting the practical justification afforded by their signal deliverance from suffering.

11. *For as the earth puts forth its growth, and as the garden makes its plants to grow, so shall the Lord Jehovah make to grow righteousness and praise before all the nations.* Compare ch. 45 : 8 and Ps. 85 : 11, 12. The exact construction of the first

clause may be, *like the earth (which) puts forth*; or the idiom may resemble that in vulgar English which employs *like* as a conjunction no less than a preposition, *like the earth puts forth*. By *praise* we are to understand the manifestation of excellence in general, by righteousness that of moral excellence in particular. There is nothing either in the text or context to restrict this verse to the former restoration of the Jews from the Babylonian exile, any more than to their future restoration to the Holy Land. The glory of the promise is its universality, in which the fulfilment will no doubt be coextensive with the prophecy itself.

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## CHAPTER LXII.

THE words of the great Deliverer are continued from the foregoing chapter. He will not rest until the glorious change in the condition of his people is accomplished, v. 1. They shall be recognized by kings and nations as the people of Jehovah, vs. 2, 3. She who seemed to be forsaken is still his spouse, vs. 4, 5. The church is required to watch and pray for the fulfilment of the promise, vs. 6, 7. God has sworn to protect her and supply her wants, vs. 8, 9. Instead of a single nation, all the nations of the earth shall flow unto her, v. 10. The good news of salvation shall no longer be confined, but universally diffused, v. 11. The glory of the church is the redemption of the world, v. 12.

1. *For Zion's sake I will not be still, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness go forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp (that) burneth.* It has been disputed



whether these are the words of the Messiah or the Prophet, who frequently assumes the person and expresses the feelings of different characters in this great drama, without any express intimation of the change in the text itself. Perhaps the most satisfactory conclusion is, that if the Prophet here speaks of himself, he also speaks by implication of his associates and successors in the office, not excluding Christ as the last and greatest of the series; so that both exegetical hypotheses may in this way be combined and reconciled. If an exclusive subject must be chosen, it is no doubt the same as in the first verse of the foregoing chapter. The sense of righteousness and salvation is the same as in ch. 61 : 10 and elsewhere. The going forth here mentioned is the same as in Ps. 19 : 6, and brightness may specifically signify the dawn of day or the rising of the sun, as in Prov. 4 : 18.

2. *And nations shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory; and there shall be called to thee a new name, which the mouth of Jehovah shall utter* (or pronounce distinctly). The mention of kings is intended to imply the submission even of the highest ranks to this new power. (Compare ch. 49 : 7, 23. 52 : 15.) The idea evidently is that they shall witness it and stand astonished. The *new name* may be that which is afterwards stated in v. 4, or the expression may be understood more generally as denoting change of condition for the better. (See above, ch. 1 : 26. 60 : 14, and compare Jer. 3 : 16. 33 : 16. Ezek. 48 : 35. Rev. 2 : 17. 3 : 12.) Some suppose an allusion to the change in the name of the chosen people from Jew to Christian; but the former name is still applied to the spiritual Israel, in Rom. 2 : 29 and Rev. 2 : 9. (See below, on ch. 65 : 15.) Others suppose an allusion to the ancient practice of imposing new names upon towns which have been ruined and rebuilt.

3. *And thou shalt be a crown of beauty in Jehovah's hand, and a diadem of royalty in the palm of thy God.* The only difficulty in this verse has respect to the crown's being twice emphatically placed in the hand and not upon the head. Some suppose that Jehovah is here represented as holding the crown in his hand to admire it; or for the purpose of exhibiting it to others; or for that of crowning himself. Others take *in the hand of God* to mean at his disposal, or bestowed by him. This is a good sense in itself; but upon whom could Zion or Jerusalem be thus bestowed? Others again think it obvious that as it would be incongruous to place the crown upon Jehovah's head; the only place remaining was the hand.

4. *No more shall it be called to thee (shalt thou be called) Azubah (Forsaken), and thy land shall no more be called Shemamah (Desolate); but thou shalt be called Hephzibah (My delight is in her), and thy land Beulah (Married), for Jehovah delights in thee, and thy land shall be married.* The joyful change of condition is further expressed, in the Prophet's favourite manner, by significant names. The common version not only mars the beauty of the passage, but renders it in some degree unintelligible to the English reader, by translating the first two names and retaining the others in their Hebrew dress. It is obvious that all four should be treated alike, i. e. that all the Hebrew forms should be retained or none. It is probable that they were all familiar to the Jews as female names in real life. This we know to have been the case with two of them: the mother of Jehoshaphat was named Azubah (1 Kings 22 : 42), and Manasseh's mother Hephzibah (2 Kings 21 : 1). It is better therefore to retain the Hebrew forms, in order to give them an air of reality as proper names, and at the same time to render them intelligible by translation. In the last clause there is reference to the primary meaning of the verb, viz. that

of owning or possessing; and as the inhabitants of towns are sometimes called in Hebrew their *possessors*, בעלים, a noun derived from this very verb (Josh. 24 : 11. Judg. 9 : 2. 2 Sam. 21 : 12 compared with 2 Sam. 2 : 4), its use here would suggest, as at least one meaning of the promise, thy land shall be inhabited.

5. *For (as) a young man marrieth a virgin, (so) shall thy sons marry thee, and (with) the joy of a bridegroom over a bride shall thy God rejoice over thee.* The particles of comparison are omitted, or perhaps it would be more correct to say that the comparison is only an implied one, and that the strict translation is, 'a young man marrieth a virgin, thy sons shall marry thee,' leaving the copula *and so* to be suggested by the context. So in the other clause there is no absolute need of assuming an ellipsis; since the Hebrew idiom admits of such expressions as *joying the joy* of a bridegroom, just as we may say in English a man *lives the life* of a saint, or *dies the death* of the righteous, both which combinations occur in our translation of the Bible (Gal. 2 : 20. Num. 23 : 10.)

6, 7. *On thy walls, oh Jerusalem, I have set watchmen; all the day and all the night long they shall not be silent. Ye that remind Jehovah, let there be no rest to you, and give no rest to him, until he establish and until he place Jerusalem a praise in the earth.* The promise is a general one, or rather the command that those who are constituted guardians of the church should be importunate in prayer to God on her behalf. הַמְזַכְּרִים admits of three interpretations, all consistent with Isaiah's usage. In ch. 36 : 3, 22 it seems to mean an official recorder or historiographer. In ch. 66 : 3 it means one burning incense as a memorial oblation. Hence זָכָרָה the name used in the law of Moses to denote such an offering. (See Lev. 2 : 2. 5 : 12. 24 : 7. Num. 5 : 25.) In ch. 43 : 26 the verb means to remind God

of something which he seems to have forgotten ; and as this is an appropriate description of importunate intercession, it is here entitled to the preference.

8. *Sworn hath Jehovah by his right hand and by his arm of strength, If I give thy corn any more as food to thine enemies, and if the sons of the outland shall drink thy new wine which thou hast laboured in, (I am not God).* On the elliptical formula of swearing, see above, on ch. 22 : 14. The declaration though conditional in form is in fact an absolute negation. In swearing by his hand and arm, the usual symbols of strength, he pledges his omnipotence for the fulfilment of the promise. 'As sure as I am almighty, thou shalt suffer this no more.'

9. *For those gathering it shall eat it and shall praise Jehovah, and those collecting it shall drink it in my holy courts (or in the courts of my sanctuary).* That these are but types and emblems of abundance, and security, and liberty of worship, is acknowledged even by that school of interpreters supposed to be most strenuous in favour of attaching to these promises their strictest sense.

10. *Pass, pass through the gates, clear the way of the people, raise high, raise high the highway, free (it) from stones, raise a banner (or a signal) over the nations.* The analogy of ch. 57 : 14 makes it probable that what is here described is the entrance of the nations into Zion or the church, an event so frequently and fully set forth in the preceding chapters. The gates are the gates of the ideal Zion or Jerusalem, the passage is an inward not an outward passage, and the exhortation of the text is one to all concerned, or all who have the opportunity, to take away obstructions and facilitate their entrance.

11. *Behold, Jehovah has caused it to be heard to the end of the*

*earth, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, behold, thy salvation cometh ; behold, his reward is with him and his hire before him.* There is some doubt as to the connection of the clauses. It may be questioned whether the verse contains the words uttered by Jehovah to the end of the earth, and if so, whether these continue to the end of the verse, or only to the third *behold*. But the plain sense of the words, the context here, and the analogy of ch. 40 : 10, are all completely satisfied by the hypothesis that the Messiah (or Jehovah) is here described as coming to his people, bringing with him a vast multitude of strangers or new converts, the reward of his own labours, and at the same time the occasion of a vast enlargement to his church. At the same time, let it be observed that this hypothesis is not one framed for the occasion, without reference or even in opposition to the previous explanation of passages in every point resembling this, but one suggested at the outset of the book, and found upon comparison, at every step of the interpretation, to be more satisfactory than any other.

12. *And they shall call them the Holy People, the redeemed of Jehovah, and thou shalt be called Derushah (sought for), Ir-lo-nee-zabah (City not forsaken).* The first verb is indefinite, they (i. e. men) shall call ; hence the parallel expression has the passive form. The distinction here so clearly made by the use of the second and third persons, is supposed by the modern Germans to be that between the city and her returning citizens ; but this, as we have seen repeatedly before, involves a constant vacillation between different senses of Jerusalem and Zion in the foregoing context. The only supposition which can be consistently maintained, is that it always means the city, but the city considered merely as a representative or sign of the whole system and economy, of which it was the visible centre. The true distinction is between the church or chosen people as it is, and the vast accessions yet to be received from

the world around it. Even the latter shall be honoured with the name of Holy People, while the church itself, becoming coextensive with the world, shall cease to be an object of contempt or disregard to God or man. The sense of *sought for* seems to be determined by the parallel description in Jer. 30:14, as expressing the opposite of the complaint in ch 49:14.

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## CHAPTER LXIII.

THE influx of the gentiles into Zion having been described in the preceding verses, the destruction of her enemies is now sublimely represented as a sanguinary triumph of Jehovah or the Messiah, vs. 1-6. The Prophet then supposes the catastrophe already past, and takes a retrospective view of God's compassions towards his people, and of their unfaithfulness during the old economy, vs. 7-14. He then assumes the tone of earnest supplication, such as might have been offered by the believing Jews when all seemed lost in the destruction of their commonwealth and temple, vs. 15-19.

1. *Who (is) this coming from Edom, bright (as to his) garments from Bozrah, this one adorned in his apparel, bending in the abundance of his strength? I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save.* The hypothesis that this is a detached prophecy, unconnected with what goes before or follows, is now commonly abandoned as a mere evasion. The dramatic form of the description is recognized by modern writers, but without the awkward supposition of a chorus. It is not necessary even to introduce the people as a party to the dialogue.



The questions may be naturally put into the mouth of the Prophet himself. Interpreters are much divided as to the Edom of this passage. That it is not merely a play upon the meaning of the name (*viz.* red), is clear from the mention of the chief town, Bozrah. Most interpreters, even of the modern German school, suppose Edom to be here, as in ch. 34, the representative of Israel's most inveterate enemies. The connection with what goes before is, that the restored Jews might apprehend the enmity of certain neighbouring nations, who had rejoiced in their calamity; and that the prophecy before us was intended to allay this apprehension. *Speaking in righteousness* is understood by most of the modern writers in the sense of speaking about it or concerning it, in which case righteousness must have the sense of deliverance, or at least be regarded as its cause. It is much more natural, however, to explain the phrase as meaning, I that speak in truth, I who promise and am able to perform. The terms of this description are applied in Rev. 19: 13 to the victorious Word of God.

2. *Why (is there) redness to thy raiment, and (why are) thy garments like (those of) one treading in a wine-press?* The adjective is here used substantively, just as we speak of a deep red in English. Or the word here employed may be explained as the infinitive, *to be red*. The allusion is of course to the natural red wine of the east, that of some vineyards on Mount Lebanon being almost black. It is a slight but effective stroke in this fine picture, that the first verse seems to speak of the stranger as still at a distance, whereas in the second he has come so near as to be addressed directly.

3. *The press I have trodden by myself, and of the nations there was not a man with me; and I will tread them in my anger and trample them in my fury, and their juice shall spirt upon my gar-*

*ments, and all my vesture I have stained.* The word here used for *press* is different from that in the foregoing verse, and occurs elsewhere only in Hagg. 2: 16. According to its seeming derivation, it denotes the place where grapes are crushed or broken, as the other does the place where they are pressed or trodden. The comparison suggested in the question (v. 2) is here carried out in detail. Being asked why he looks like the treader of a wine-press, he replies that he has been treading one, and that alone, which some understand to mean without the aid of labourers or servants. The meaning of the figure is then expressed in literal terms. 'Of the nations there was not a man with me.' This expression and the otherwise inexplicable alternation of the tenses make it probable that two distinct treadings are here mentioned, one in which he might have expected aid from the nations, and another in which the nations should themselves be trodden down as a punishment of this neglect. Or the futures may denote merely a relative futurity, i. e. in reference to the act first mentioned. The more general opinion is, however, that but one act of treading is here mentioned, and that the nations are themselves represented as the grapes. The words *with me* are added to convey the idea that all the nations were on the adverse side, none on that of the conqueror. The sense will then be not that they refused to join in trampling others, but simply that they were among the trampled. As if he had said, I trod the press alone, and all the nations, without exception, were trodden in it. By all the nations we are of course to understand all but God's people. The treading of the wine-press alone is an expression often applied in sermons and in religious books and conversation to our Saviour's sufferings. While the impossibility of such a sense in the original passage cannot be too strongly stated, there is no need of denying that the figure may be happily accommodated in the way suggested; as many expressions of the Old Testament may be applied to

different objects with good effect, provided we are careful to avoid confounding such accommodations with the strict and primary import of the passage.

4. *For the day of vengeance (is) in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.* For the sense of *day* and *year* in this connection, see above, on ch. 61 : 2. *In my heart*, i. e. my mind or purpose. It is not necessary to explain the participle in a future sense (*to be redeemed*), since their redemption was as firmly settled in the divine purpose as the day of vengeance.

5. *And I look, and there is none helping ; and I stand aghast, and there is none sustaining ; and my own arm saves for me, and my fury it sustains me.* These expressions have already been explained in ch. 59 : 16. Fury here takes the place of righteousness not as a synonyme but as an equivalent. God's wrath is but the executioner and agent of his justice. Upon either he might therefore be described as exclusively relying. The present form is used in the translation, on account of the uncertainty in which the use of the tenses is involved, and which may arise in part from an intentional confusion of the past and future in the mind of one who had begun a great work, and was yet to finish it.

6. *And I tread the nations in my anger, and I make them drunk in my wrath, and I bring down to the earth their juice.* The use of the word *tread* leads to the resumption of the figure of a wine-press, which is employed besides this passage in Lam. 1 : 15. Joel 3 : 13. Rev. 14 : 19, 20. In order to connect the common reading with the context, we have only to assume a mixture of metaphors, such as we continually meet with in Isaiah, or a sudden change of figure, which is not only common but characteristic of this prophet.

7. *The mercies of Jehovah I will cause to be remembered, the praises of Jehovah according to all that Jehovah hath done for us, and the great goodness to the house of Israel which he hath done for them, according to his compassions and according to the multitude of his mercies.* The sudden change of tone in this verse has led to many suppositions as to its connection with what goes before and follows. On the general principle assumed throughout our exposition as to the design and subject of these prophecies, the passage must be understood as relating to the favours experienced and the sins committed by the chosen people throughout the period of the old dispensation. There is no need of assuming any speaker but the Prophet himself. The plural form *mercies* may be intended to denote abundance. *I will cause to be remembered*, may have reference to men; in which case the phrase is equivalent to celebrate, record, or praise. But as these acknowledgments are merely preparatory to a prayer that God would renew his ancient favours to them, it is better to understand it as meaning, I will cause God himself to remember, or remind him, in which application the verb is often used, e. g. in the titles of Ps. 38 and 70.

8. *And he said, Only they are my people, (my) children shall not lie (or deceive); and he became a saviour for them.* To the general acknowledgment of God's goodness to his people, there is now added a specification of his favours, beginning with the great distinguishing favour by which they became what they were. This verse is commonly explained as an expression of unfounded confidence and hope on God's part, *surely they are my people, children that will not lie*. This must then be accounted for as anthropopathy; but although the occurrence of this figure in the Scriptures is indisputable, it is comparatively rare, and not to be assumed without necessity. Besides, the explanation just referred to rests almost entirely on the sense attached to אֱשֶׁר as a mere particle of asseveration. Now in every

other case where Isaiah uses it, the restrictive sense of *only* is not admissible merely, but necessary to the full force of the sentence. It is surely not the true mode of interpretation, to assume a doubtful definition for the sake of obtaining an unsatisfactory and offensive sense. Another advantage of the strict translation is, that it makes the Prophet go back to the beginning of their course, and instead of setting out from the hopes which God expressed after the choice of Israel, records the choice itself. Thus understood, the first clause is a solemn declaration of his having chosen Israel, to the exclusion of all other nations. *Only they* (and no others) *are my people*. The second clause may possibly mean, (*their*) *sons shall not deal falsely*, i. e. degenerate from their fathers' faith. In either case, the future is the future of command, as in the decalogue, not that of mere prediction. The English Version, *so he was their saviour*, is a needless departure from the simplicity of the original, and aggravates the misinterpretation of the first clause, by suggesting that he was their saviour because he believed they would be faithful. The verse in Hebrew simply states two facts, without intimating any causal relation between them. He chose them *and* he saved them.

9. *In all their enmity he was not an enemy, and the angel of his face (or presence) saved them, in his love and in his sparing mercy he redeemed them, and he took them up and carried them all the days of old.* The first clause is famous as the subject of discordant and even contradictory interpretations. These have been multiplied by the existence of a doubt as to the text. The Masora notes this as one of fifteen places in which (סב) *not* is written by mistake for (יב) *to him* or *it*. Another instance of the same alleged error in the text of Isaiah occurs in ch. 9 : 2 (3.) The English Version renders it, *in all their affliction he was afflicted*. This explanation, with the text on which it is founded, and which is exhibited by a number of manuscripts and edi-



tions, is favoured, not only by the strong and affecting sense which it yields, but by the analogy of Judges 10 : 16. 11 : 7. in one of which places the same phrase is used to denote human suffering, and in the other God is represented as sympathizing with it. The objections to it are, that it gratuitously renders necessary another anthropopathic explanation ; that the natural collocation of the words, if this were the meaning, would be different ; that the negative is expressed by all the ancient versions ; and that the critical presumption is in favour of the textual reading, as the more ancient, and it ought not to be now abandoned, if a coherent sense can be put upon it, as it can in this case. A much more natural construction is, ‘in all their affliction he did not afflict (them) ;’ which, however, is scarcely reconcilable with history. This difficulty is avoided by a modification of the same construction, *in all their afflictions he was not an adversary*, i e. although he afflicted them, he did not hate them. This agrees well with what immediately follows, but is still liable to the objection that it takes the same word in two entirely different senses, which can only be admissible in case of necessity. An interpretation which gives the words essentially the same sense, yet so far modified as to explain the difference of form, is that which takes the words as correlative derivatives from one sense of the same root, but distinguished from each other as an abstract and a concrete, *enemy* and *enmity*. A real difficulty in the way of this interpretation is the want of any usage to sustain the latter definition, which, however, is so easily deducible from the primary meaning, and so clearly indicated by the parallel expression, that it may perhaps be properly assumed in a case where the only choice is one of difficulties. Thus understood, the clause simply throws the blame of all their conflicts with Jehovah on themselves : *in all their enmity* (to him) *he was not an enemy* (to them). The proof of this assertion is that *he saved them*, not from Egypt merely, but from all their early troubles, with particular reference per-



haps to the period of the Judges, in the history of which this verb very frequently occurs. (See Judges 2:16, 18. 3:15. 6:14. etc.) This salvation is ascribed, however, not directly to Jehovah, but to *the angel of his face or presence*, whom Jehovah promised to send with Israel (Ex. 23:20-23), and whom he did send, and who is identified with the presence of Jehovah, and with Jehovah himself. The combination of these passages determines the sense of *the angel of his presence*, as denoting the angel whose presence was the presence of Jehovah, or in whom Jehovah was personally present, and precludes the explanation given by many writers, who suppose it to mean merely an angel who habitually stands in the presence of Jehovah (1 Kings 22:19), just as human courtiers or officers of state are said to see the king's face (Jer. 52:25). The old Christian doctrine is that the Angel of God's presence, who is mentioned in the passages already cited, and from time to time in other books of the Old Testament (Gen. 28:13. 31:11. 48:16. Ex. 3:2. Josh. 5:14. Judges 13:6. Hos. 12:5. Zech. 3:1. Mal. 3:1. Ps. 34:8), was that Divine being who is represented in the New as the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person (Heb. 1:3), the image of God (2 Cor. 4:4. Col. 1:15), in whose face the glory of God shines (2 Cor. 4:6), and in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9). For the true sense of what follows, as to taking up and carrying them, see above, on ch. 46:3. The verb *redem* is not only one of frequent occurrence in these prophecies, (ch. 43:1. 44:22, 23. 48:20. 49:7. etc.), but is expressly applied elsewhere to the redemption of Israel from Egypt (Ex 6:5. Ps. 74:2. 77:16), and is therefore applicable to all other analogous deliverances.

10. *And they rebelled and grieved his holy spirit (or spirit of holiness), and he was turned for them into an enemy, he himself fought against them.* The pronoun at the beginning is em-

phatic: they on their part, as opposed to God's forbearance and long-suffering. There seems to be an allusion in this clause to the injunction given to the people at the exodus, in reference to the Angel who was to conduct them: Beware of him and obey his voice, provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions, for my name is in him (Ex 23 : 21). That the Spirit of this verse, like the Angel of the ninth, is represented as divine, is evident not only from a comparison of Ps 78 : 17, 40, where the same thing is said of God himself, but also from the fact that those interpreters who will not recognize a personal spirit in this passage, unanimously understand the spirit either as denoting an attribute of God or God himself. This passage is in some sort historical, and shows the progress of the alienation between God and Israel. Having shown in the preceding verse that it began upon the part of Israel, and was long resisted and deferred by Jehovah, he now shows how at length his patience was exhausted, and he really became what he was not before. The disputes among interpreters whether this verse has reference to the conduct of the people in the wilderness, or under the Judges, or before the Babylonish exile, or before the final destruction of Jerusalem, are only useful as a demonstration that the passage is a general description, which was often verified. From this verse Paul has borrowed a remarkable expression in Eph 4 : 30. (Compare Matt. 12 : 31, Acts 7 : 51. Heb. 10 : 29.)

11. *And he remembered the days of old, Moses (and) his people. Where is he that brought them up from the sea, the shepherd of his flock? Where is he that put within him his Holy Spirit.* Some make Jehovah the subject of the first verb, and suppose him to be here described as relenting. But as the following can be naturally understood only as the language of the people, especially when compared with Jer. 2 : 6, most writers are agreed in referring this clause to the people also. The Targum gives

a singular turn to the sentence by supplying *lest they say before* the second clause, which then becomes the language of the enemies of Israel, exulting in the failure of Jehovah's promises. This explanation may appear to derive some support from the analogy of Deut 32 : 17, which no doubt suggested it; but a fatal objection is that the essential idea is one not expressed but arbitrarily supplied. Another singular interpretation is the one contained in the Dutch Bible, which makes God the subject of the first verb but includes it in the language of the people complaining that he dealt with them no longer as he once did. Once he remembered the days of old, etc., but now where is he, etc. But here again that on which the whole depends must be supplied without authority. The latest writers are agreed that the first clause describes the repentance of the people, and that the second gives their very words, contrasting their actual condition with their former privileges and enjoyments. The English Bible makes *Moses* and *his people* correlatives, as objects of the verb *remembered* : He remembered the ancient days, viz. those of Moses and his people. The simplest construction of the next clause is, where is he that brought them up from the sea, (that brought up) the shepherd of his flock? The *him* in the last clause refers to *people*. The clause implies, if it does not express directly, the idea of a personal spirit, as in the preceding verse.

12. *Leading them by the right hand of Moses (and) his glorious arm, cleaving the waters from before them, to make for him an everlasting name?* The sentence and the interrogation are continued from the foregoing verse. The participle with the article there defines or designates the subject as *the one bringing up*; the participle here without the article simply continues the description. The *right hand* may be mentioned in allusion to the wielding of the rod by Moses, and the *glorious arm* may be either his or that of God himself, which last sense is expressed

in the English version by a change of preposition (*by the right hand of Moses with his glorious arm*). The same ambiguity exists in the last clause, where the *everlasting name* may be the honour put upon Moses or the glory which redounded to Jehovah himself, as in ch. 55 : 13.

13. *Making them walk in the depths, like the horse in the desert they shall not stumble.* The description of the exodus is still continued, and its perfect security illustrated by comparisons. The desert seems to be referred to as a vast plain free from inequalities. The last verb would seem most naturally to refer to *the horse*; but its plural form forbids this construction, while its future form creates a difficulty in referring it to Israel. The true solution is afforded by the writer's frequent habit of assuming his position in the midst of the events which he describes, and speaking of them as he would have spoken if he had been really so situated. The comparison in the first clause brings up to his view the people actually passing through the wilderness; and in his confident assurance of their safe and easy progress he exclaims, 'they will not stumble!' The same explanation is admissible in many cases where it is customary to confound the tenses, or regard their use as perfectly capricious.

14. *As the herd into the valley will go down, the Spirit of Jehovah will make him rest. So didst thou lead thy people, to make for thyself a name of glory.* This version is not only more exact than the common one, but removes the ambiguity in the construction, by precluding the reference of *him*, in *make him rest*, to the preceding noun, which is natural enough in the English Version, though forbidden in Hebrew by the difference of gender. The *him* really refers to Israel or the people. A similar agency is elsewhere ascribed to the Spirit of God. (Ps 143 : 10. Hag. 2 : 5. Neh. 9 : 20.) The use of the futures in this

clause is precisely the same as in the foregoing verse. In the last clause the Prophet ceases to regard the scene as actually present and resumes the tone of historical retrospection, at the same time summing up the whole in one comprehensive proposition, *thus didst thou lead thy people*. With the last words of the verse compare ch. 60 : 21. 61 : 3.

15. *Look (down) from heaven and see from thy dwelling-place of holiness and beauty! Where is thy zeal and thy might (or mighty deeds)? The sounding of thy bowels and thy mercies towards me have withdrawn themselves.* The foregoing description of God's ancient favours is now made the ground of an importunate appeal for new ones. The unusual word for dwelling-place is borrowed from the prayer of Solomon (1 Kings 8 : 13) For a similar description of heaven, see above, ch. 57 : 15. God is here represented as withdrawn into heaven and no longer active upon earth. For the meaning of his *zeal*, see above, on ch 59 : 17. *Bowels and mercies*. Although we are obliged to render one of these nouns by a literal and the other by a figurative term, both of them properly denote the viscera, on the figurative use of which to signify strong feeling, see above, on ch. 16 : 11. The last verb in the verse denotes a violent suppression or restraint of strong emotion (Gen. 43 : 30. 45 : 1), and is sometimes applied directly to God himself. (See above, ch. 42 : 14, and below, ch. 64 : 11) The last clause may be variously divided without a material change of meaning. The English Version makes the last verb a distinct interrogation, *are they restrained?* Tho objection to this is that the second question is not natural, and that it arbitrarily assumes an interrogative construction without anything to indicate it, as the *where* cannot be repeated. The best construction is that which makes the last clause a simple affirmation, or at most an impassioned exclamation.



16. *For thou (art) our father ; for Abraham hath not known us, and Israel will not recognize us ; thou Jehovah (art) our father, our redeemer of old (or from everlasting) is thy name.* The common version needlessly obscures the sense and violates the usage of the language by rendering the first *אֲבִי* *doubtless*, and the second *though*. Why do we ask thee to look down from heaven and to hear our prayer ? *Because thou art our father.* This does not merely mean our natural creator, but our founder, our national progenitor, as in Deut. 32 : 6. Here, however, it appears to be employed in an emphatic and exclusive sense, as if he had said, ‘thou and thou alone art our father ;’ for he immediately adds, as if to explain and justify this strange assertion, ‘for Abraham has not known us, and Israel will not recognize or acknowledge us.’ The assimilation of these tenses, as if both past or future, is entirely arbitrary ; and their explanation as both present is a gratuitous evasion. As in many other cases, past and future are here joined to make the proposition universal. Dropping the peculiar parallel construction, the sense is that neither Abraham nor Israel have known or will know any thing about us, have recognized or will hereafter recognize us as their children. The church or chosen people, although once, for temporary reasons, co-extensive and coincident with a single race, is not essentially a national organization, but a spiritual body. Its father is not Abraham or Israel, but Jehovah, who is and always has been its Redeemer, who has borne that name from everlasting. According to the explanation which has now been given, this verse explicitly asserts what is implied and indirectly taught throughout these prophecies, in reference to the true design and mission of the Church, and its relation to Jehovah, to the world, and to the single race with which of old it seemed to be identified. This confirmation of our previous conclusions is the more satisfactory, because no use has hitherto been made of it, by anticipation, in determining the sense of many more obscure expressions, to which it may now be con-



sidered as affording a decisive key. It only remains to add, as a preventive of misapprehension, that the strong terms of this verse are of course to be comparatively understood, not as implying that the church will ever have occasion to repudiate its historical relation to the patriarchs, or cease to include among its members many of their natural descendants, but simply as denying all continued or perpetual pre-eminence to Israel as a race, and exalting the common relation of believers to their great Head as paramount to all connection with particular progenitors—the very doctrine so repeatedly and emphatically taught in the New Testament.

17. *Why wilt thou make us wander, oh Jehovah, from thy ways; (why) wilt thou harden our heart from thy fear? Return, for the sake of thy servants, the tribes of thy inheritance.* The earnestness of the prayer is evinced by an increasing boldness of expostulation. The particle in *from thy fear* is commonly supposed to have a privative or negative meaning, so as not to fear thee; but there is rather an allusion to the wandering just before mentioned, as if he had said, ‘and why wilt thou make us to wander, by hardening our heart, from thy fear?’ This last expression, as in many other cases, includes all the duties and affections of true piety. For the sense of God’s returning to his people, see above, on ch. 52 : 8. *The tribes of thine inheritance* is an equivalent expression to *thy people*, which originated in the fact that Israel, like other ancient oriental races, was divided into tribes.

18. *For a little thy holy people possessed, our enemies trod down thy sanctuary.* The sense of this verse is extremely dubious. The modern writers are agreed in making *holy people* the subject of the verb, and supplying the object from the other clause, *thy sanctuary*. According to the usual construction of the sentence, it assigns as a reason for Jehovah’s interference, the short time

during which the chosen people had possessed the land of promise. It is agreed that the verse describes a subjection to enemies. The question is whether this subjection is itself described as temporary, or the peaceable possession which preceded it. In no case can an argument be drawn from it to prove that this whole passage has respect to the Jews in their present dispersion: first, because the sufferings of the church in after ages are frequently presented under figures drawn from the peculiar institutions of the old economy; and secondly, because the early history of Israel is as much the early history of the Christian church as of the Jewish nation, so that we have as much right as the Jews to lament the profanation of the Holy Land, and more cause to pray for its recovery by Christendom, than they for its restoration to themselves.

19. *We are of old, thou hast not ruled over them, thy name has not been called upon them. Oh that thou wouldst rend the heavens (and) come down, (that) from before thee the mountains might quake (or flow down).* Most of the modern writers have adopted a construction of the first clause suggested by the paraphrastic versions of the Septuagint and Vulgate. This supposes the description of the people's alienation from God to be continued: We have long been those (or like those) over whom thou didst not rule, and who were not called by thy name; that is to say, thou hast long regarded and treated us as aliens rather than thy chosen people. But the sense which it puts upon the clause is very far from being obvious, or one which a Hebrew writer would be likely to express in this way. Another old and well-known construction of the clause is founded on the Chaldee Paraphrase, which understands this not as a description of their misery but as an assertion of their claim to relief, in the form of a comparison between themselves and their oppressors. This is the sense given in the English version: *We are thine, thou never bearest rule over them.* To this form of the interpretation it

has been objected, not without reason, that it puts upon the verb *we are* or *have been* a sense not justified by usage, or in other words, that it arbitrarily supplies the essential idea upon which the whole turns, namely, *thine* or *thy people*. But this objection may be easily removed by reading *we are of old*. The point of comparison is then their relative antiquity, the enemy being represented as a new race lately come into possession of the rights belonging to the old. There is then no need of supplying *thine*, the relation of the people to Jehovah being not particularly hinted here, although suggested by the whole connection. With this modification the construction of the English Bible seems entitled to the preference, *Thou didst not rule over them*. This has no reference, of course, to God's providential government, but only to the peculiar theocratical relation which he bears to his own people. The same idea is expressed by the following words, as to the sense of which see above, on ch. 48 : 1. The inconvenience of strongly marked divisions in a book like this, is exemplified by the disputes among interpreters, whether the remaining words of this verse as it stands in the masoretic text should or should not be separated from it and connected with the following chapter. The truth is that there ought to be no pause at all in this place, the transition from complaint to the expression of an ardent wish being not only intentional but highly effective. It is true that this clause ought not to be separated from what follows; but it does not follow that it ought to be severed from what goes before. Our own exposition will proceed upon the principle heretofore applied, that this is a continuous composition, that the usual divisions are mere matters of convenience, or inconvenience as the case may be, and that more harm is likely to result from too much than from too little separation of the parts. The passionate apostrophe in this clause, far from being injured or obscured, is rendered more expressive by its close connection with the previous complaints and lamentations. The idea now suggested is, that

weary of complaint, the people or the prophet speaking for them suddenly appeals to God directly with an ardent wish that he would deal with them as in days of old. The remaining words are a poetical description of Jehovah's interposition or the manifestation of his presence, under figures drawn perhaps from the account of his epiphany on Sinai.

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## CHAPTER LXIV.

THIS chapter, like the one before it, from which it is in fact inseparable, has respect to the critical or turning point between the old and new dispensations, and presents it just as it might naturally have appeared to the believing Jews, i. e. the first Christian converts, at that juncture. The strongest confidence is expressed in the divine power, founded upon former experience, vs. 1-3. The two great facts of Israel's rejection as a nation, and the continued existence of the church, are brought together in v. 4. The unworthiness of Israel is acknowledged still more fully, vs. 5, 6. The sovereign authority of God is humbly recognized, v. 7. His favour is earnestly implored, v. 8. The external prerogatives of Israel are lost, v. 9. But will God for that cause cast off the true Israel, his own church or people? v. 10.

1. (2) *As fire kindles brush, fire boils water—to make known thy name to thine enemies, from before thee nations shall tremble.* The last clause coheres directly with the preceding verse, while the first is a parenthetical comparison; for which cause some of the latest writers throw the last words of ch. 63 into this sentence. Either of two constructions may be here adopted—as a

fire of brushwood burns, or, as fire kindles brush—the last of which is preferred by most interpreters, as simpler in itself and because *fire* is the subject of the verb in the next clause also. The point of comparison in both these clauses is the rapidity and ease with which the effect is produced. The literal effect is described in the next words, to make known thy name, i. e. to manifest thy being and thine attributes to thine enemies. In both parts of the sentence the construction passes as it were insensibly from the infinitive to the future, a transition not unfrequent in Hebrew syntax.

2. (3) *In thy doing fearful things (which) we expect not, (oh that) thou wouldst descend, (that) the mountains from before thee might flow down.* There are two very different constructions of this verse. The English Version makes it a direct historical statement of a past event: When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence. This seems to be the simplest possible construction; but it is attended by a serious grammatical difficulty, viz. the necessity of referring the future to past time, without anything in the connection to facilitate or justify the version. On the other hand, this word appears to be decisive of the future bearing of the whole verse, and in favour of the syntax which supposes the influence of the optative particle to be still continued through this verse, as well as that before it: (Oh that) in doing terrible things, such as we expect not, thou wouldst come down, etc.

3. (4) *And from eternity they have not heard, they have not perceived by the ear, the eye hath not seen, a God beside thee (who) will do for (one) waiting for him.* This verse assigns a reason why such fearful things should be expected from Jehovah, namely because he alone had proved himself able to perform them. The verbs are indefinite, and mean that men in general have



not heard, or, as we should say, that no one has heard, or in a passive form, it has not been heard. *Do* may be either taken absolutely, or as governing *them*, i. e. the fearful things mentioned in v. 2. *Waiting for God* implies faith, hope, and patient acquiescence. (See above, on ch. 40 : 31.) The construction here given is the one now commonly adopted, and is also given in the margin of the English Bible, while the text of that version makes *God* a vocative, and ascribes to him not only the doing but the knowledge of the fearful things in question. This construction agrees better with Paul's quotation (1 Cor. 2 : 9) of the words as descriptive of the gospel as a mystery or something hidden till revealed by the Spirit. (Compare Rom. 16 : 26, and Matt. 13 : 17.) But in this, as in many other cases, the apostle, by deliberately varying the form of the expression, shows that it was not his purpose to interpret the original passage, but simply to make use of its terms in expressing his own thoughts on a kindred subject.

4. (5) *Thou hast met with one rejoicing and executing righteousness ; in thy ways shall they remember thee ; behold, thou hast been wroth, and we have sinned ; in them is perpetuity, and we shall be saved.* There is perhaps no sentence in Isaiah, or indeed in the Old Testament, which has more divided and perplexed interpreters, or on which the ingenuity and learning of the modern writers have thrown less light. To enumerate the various interpretations, would be endless and of no avail. Nothing more will here be attempted than to give the reader some idea of the various senses which have been attached to the particular expressions, as a means of showing that we have at best but a choice of difficulties, and of procuring for our own exposition a more favourable hearing than it might be thought entitled to in other circumstances. The first verb has been variously taken in the sense of meeting as an enemy and meeting as a friend, making a covenant, removing out of life, interceding.



and accepting intercession. It has been construed as a simple affirmation, both in the past and present form; as a conditional expression and as the expression of a wish. The next verb has been also treated both as a direct and as a relative expression, they will remember thee, and those who remember thee. *Thy ways* has been explained to mean the ways of God's commandments and of his providential dispensations. *In them* has been referred to ways, to sins, to sufferings, to the older race of Israelites. עוֹלָם has been treated as a noun and as an adverb; as meaning perpetuity, eternity, a long time, and forever. The last verb has been construed interrogatively (shall or could we be saved?), optatively (may we be saved), and indicatively, present, past, and future (we have been, are, or shall be saved). Of the various combinations of these elements on record, the most important in relation to the first clause are the following: Thou hast taken away those who rejoiced to do righteousness and remembered thee in thy ways. Thou didst accept the intercession of those who rejoiced etc. Thou didst encounter or resist as if they had been enemies those who rejoiced etc. Thou meetest as a friend him rejoicing etc. If thou meet with or light upon one rejoicing etc. they will remember thee in thy ways. Oh that thou mightest meet with one rejoicing etc. Of the second clause, the following constructions may be noted: In them (i. e. our sins) we have been always, and yet we shall be saved. We have sinned against them (i. e. thy ways) always, and yet have been delivered. In them (i. e. thy ways of mercy) there is continuance, and we are saved. Thou wast angry after we had sinned against them (i. e. our fathers) and yet we are safe. We have sinned in them (thy ways) of old, and can we be saved? In them (our miseries) there is long continuance; oh may we be saved! In them (the ways of duty) let us ever go, and we shall be saved. Had we been always in them (thy ways), we should have been saved. The general meaning of the sentence may be thus expressed in

paraphrase: 'Although thou hast cast off Israel as a nation, thou hast nevertheless met or favourably answered every one rejoicing to do righteousness, and in thy ways or future dispensations such shall still remember and acknowledge thee; thou hast been angry, and with cause, for we have sinned; but in them, thy purposed dispensations, there is perpetuity, and we shall be saved.' The abrogation of the old economy, though fatal to the national pre-eminence of Israel, was so far from destroying the true church or the hopes of true believers, that it revealed the way of life more clearly than ever, and substituted for an insufficient, temporary system, a complete and everlasting one. In this construction of the sentence, the verbs and nouns are taken in their usual sense, and the pronoun refers to its natural antecedent.

5. (6) *And we were like the unclean, all of us, and like a filthy garment all our righteousnesses (virtues or good works), and we faded like the (fading) leaf all of us, and our iniquities like the wind will take us up (or carry us away).* Having shown what they are or hope to be through the mercy of God and the righteousness of Christ, they state more fully what they are in themselves, and what they must expect to be if left to themselves. This twofold reference to their past experience and their future destiny accounts for the transition from the preterite to the future, without arbitrarily confounding them together. Some understand the comparison with withered leaves as a part of the description of their sin, while others apply it to their punishment. The first hypothesis is favoured by the difference of the tenses, which has been already noticed; the last by the parallelism of the clauses. It is probable, however, that here as in ch. 1: 4, the two things ran together in the writer's mind, and that no refined distinction as to this point was intended. (With the figures of the last clause compare ch. 57: 13. Ps. 1: 4 Job 27: 21.) Some apply the last expression to the actual

deportation of the Jews to Babylon. It is remarkable, however, that in this, as in other cases heretofore considered, there is no expression which admits of this application exclusively, and none which admit of it at all but for their generality and vagueness.

6 (7.) *And there is no one calling on thy name, rousing himself to lay hold on thee ; for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast melted us because of (or by means of) our iniquities.* Although there is evident allusion to the past implied in the very form of the expression, the description reaches to the present also, and describes not only what the speakers were, but what they are when considered in themselves, as well as the effects of their own weakness and corruption; which they have already experienced. Calling on the name of God is here used in its proper sense of praying to him and invoking his assistance and protection ; which idea is expressed still more strongly by the next phrase, rousing himself (which implies a just view of the evil and a strenuous exertion to correct it) to lay hold upon thee, a strong figure for attachment to a person and reliance on him. *In the hand* may either mean by means of, in the midst of, or because of ; or we may suppose that the phrase strictly means, thou dost melt us into the hand of our iniquities, i. e. subject us to them, make us unable to resist them, and passively submissive to their power.

7 (8.) *And now, Jehovah, our father (art) thou, we the clay and thou our potter, and the work of thy hands (are) we all.* Instead of relying upon any supposed merits of their own, they appeal to their very dependence upon God, as a reason why he should have mercy on them. The Prophet here resumes the thought of ch. 63 : 16, where, as here, the paternity ascribed to God is not that of natural creation in the case of individuals, but the creation of the church or chosen people, and of Israel as a

spiritual and ideal person. The figure of the potter and the clay, implying absolute authority and power, is used twice before (ch. 29 : 6. 45 : 9), and is one of the connecting links between these later prophecies and the undisputed portion of Isaiah. There is more dignity in the original expression than in the English phrase *our potter*, as the Hebrew word properly denotes one forming or imparting shape to anything, though specially applied in usage to a workman in clay, when that material is mentioned. The same plea, derived from the relation of the creature to the maker, is used in Ps. 138 : 8, *forsake not the work of thy hands*. (Compare Ps. 76 : 1. 79 : 1.) In either case there is a tacit appeal to the covenant and promise in Gen. 17 : 7. Lev. 26 : 42-45. Deut. 7 : 6. 26 : 17, 18.

8 (9.) *Be not angry, oh Jehorah, to extremity, and do not to eternity remember guilt ; lo, look, we pray thee, thy people (are) we all*. This is the application of the argument presented in the foregoing verse, the actual prayer founded on the fact there stated. The common version (*very sore*) fails to reproduce the form of the original expression, as consisting of a preposition and a noun.

9 (10.) *Thy holy cities are a desert, Zion is a desert, Jerusalem a waste*. By holy cities, some understand the towns of Judah ; others Jerusalem alone, considered as consisting of two towns, the upper and the lower, here called Zion and Jerusalem, though each of these names sometimes comprehends the whole, and the latter is dual in its very form. If the writer had intended to employ the terms in the former sense, he would hardly have confined his specifications in the other clause to Zion and Jerusalem. In any case, these must be regarded as the chief if not the only subjects of his proposition. On the whole, the true sense of the verse, expressed or implied, appears to be that Zion has long been a desolation and Jerusalem a waste.

10. *Our house of holiness and beauty, (in) which our father praised thee, has been burned up with fire, and all our delights (or desirable places) have become a desolation.* The elliptical use of the relative in reference to place is the same as in Gen. 39 : 20. *Burned up*, literally, become a burning of fire, as in ch. 9 : 6. The reference in this verse is of course to the destruction of the temple, but to which destruction is disputed. Some refer it to the Babylonian conquest, when the temple, as we are expressly told, was burnt (Jer. 52 : 13); some to its profanation by Antiochus Epiphanes, at which time, however, it was not consumed by fire; many later writers, with the Jews themselves, to its destruction by the Romans, since which the city and the land have lain desolate. To the first and last of these events the words are equally appropriate. Either hypothesis being once assumed, the particular expressions admit of being easily adapted to it. With our own hypothesis the passage may be reconciled in several different ways. There is nothing, however, in the terms themselves, or in the analogy of prophetic language, to forbid our understanding this as a description of the desolations of the church itself, expressed by figures borrowed from the old economy and from the ancient history of Israel. If literally understood, the destruction of the temple and the holy city may be here lamented as a loss not merely to the Jewish nation, but to the church of God to which they rightfully belong and by which they ought yet to be recovered, a sense of which obligation blended with some superstitious errors gave occasion to the fanatical attempt of the crusades. (See above, on ch. 63 : 18.)

12. *Wilt thou for these (things) restrain thyself, oh Jehovah, wilt thou keep silence and afflict us to extremity?* This is simply another application of the argument by way of an importunate appeal to the divine compassions. Self-restraint and silence, as applied to God, are common figures for inaction and apparent



indifference to the interests and especially the sufferings of his people. (See above; on ch 42 : 14 and 63 : 15.) The question is not whether God will remain silent in spite of what his people suffered, but whether the loss of their external advantages will induce him to forsake them. The question as in many other cases implies a negation of the strongest kind. The destruction of the old theocracy was God's own act and was designed to bring the church under a new and far more glorious dispensation. How the loss of a national organization and pre-eminence was to be made good is fully stated in the following chapter.

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## CHAPTER LXV.

THE great enigma of Israel's simultaneous loss and gain is solved by a prediction of the calling of the gentiles, v. 1. This is connected with the obstinate unfaithfulness of the chosen people, v. 2. They are represented under the two main aspects of their character at different periods, as gross idolaters and as pharisaical bigots, vs. 3-5. Their casting off was not occasioned by the sins of one generation but of many, vs. 6, 7. But even in this rejected race there was a chosen remnant, in whom the promises shall be fulfilled, vs. 8-10. He then reverts to the idolatrous Jews and threatens them with condign punishment, vs. 11, 12. The fate of the unbelieving carnal Israel is compared with that of the true spiritual Israel, vs. 13-16. The gospel economy is described as a new creation, v. 17. Its blessings are described under glowing figures borrowed from the old dispensation, vs. 18, 19. Premature death shall be no longer known, v. 20. Possession and enjoyment shall no longer be precarious, vs. 21-23. Their very desires shall be anticipated,



v. 24. All animosities and noxious influences shall cease **for-**  
 ever, v. 25.

1. *I have been inquired of by those that asked not ; I have been found by those that sought me not ; I have said, Behold me, behold me, to a nation (that) was not called by my name.* There is an apparent inconsistency between the first two members of the sentence in the English Version, arising from the use of the same verb (*sought*) to express two very different Hebrew verbs. The exact sense seems to be, I allowed myself to be consulted. I afforded access to myself for the purpose of consultation. This is not a mere conjectural deduction from the form of the Hebrew verb or from general analogy, but a simple statement of the actual usage of this very word, as when Jehovah says again and again of the ungodly exiles that he will not be inquired of or consulted by them (Ez. 14 : 3. 20 : 3), i. e. with effect or to any useful purpose. In this connection it is tantamount to saying that he will not hear them, answer them, or reveal himself to them ; all which or equivalent expressions have been used by different writers in the translation of the verse before us. There is nothing therefore incorrect in substance, though the form be singular, in the Septuagint version of this verb, retained in the New Testament, *ἐμαυτὸς ἐγερθήην*, I became manifest, i. e. revealed myself. The object of the verb *asked*, if exact uniformity be deemed essential, may be readily supplied from the parallel expression *sought me*. *Behold me*, or as it is sometimes rendered in the English Bible, *here I am*, is the usual idiomatic Hebrew answer to a call by name, and when ascribed to God contains an assurance of his presence rendered more emphatic by the repetition. (See above, ch. 52 : 6. 58 : 9.) It is therefore equivalent to being inquired of and being found. This last expression has occurred before in ch. 55 : 6, and as here in combination with the verb *to seek*. *A people not called by my name*, i. e. not recognized or known as my people. (See

above, ch. 48 : 2.) All interpreters agree that this is a direct continuation of the foregoing context, and most of them regard it as the answer of Jehovah to the expostulations and petitions there presented by his people. The modern Germans and the Jews apply both this verb and the next to Israel. The obvious objection is that Israel even in its worst estate could never be described as a nation which had not been called by the name of Jehovah. It is a standing characteristic of the Jews in the Old Testament, that they were called by the name of Jehovah ; but if they may also be described in terms directly opposite, whenever the interpreter prefers it, then may anything mean anything. In all their alienations, exiles, and dispersions, the children of Israel have still retained that title as their highest glory and the badge of all their tribe. An obvious and natural application may be made to the gentiles generally, whose vocation is repeatedly predicted in this book, and might be here used with powerful effect in proof that the rejection of the Jews was the result of their own obstinate perverseness, not of God's unfaithfulness or want of power. This is precisely Paul's interpretation of the passage in Rom. 10 : 20, 21, where he does not, as in many other cases, merely borrow the expressions of the Prophet, but formally interprets them, applying this verse to the gentiles and then adding, ' but to Israel (or of Israel) he saith ' what follows in the next verse. The same intention to expound the Prophet's language is clear from the apostle's mention of Isaiah's boldness in thus shocking the most cherished prepossessions of the Jews.

2. *I have spread (or stretched) out my hands all the day (or every day) to a rebellious people, those going the way not good, after their own thoughts (or designs).* The gesture mentioned in the first clause is variously explained as a gesture of simple calling, of instruction, of invitation, of persuasion. All agree that it implies God's gracious offer of himself and of his favour to the

people. Whether *all the day* or *every day* be the correct translation, the idea meant to be conveyed is evidently that of frequent repetition, or rather of unremitting constancy. The rebellious people is admitted upon all hands to be Israel. The last clause is an amplification and explanatory paraphrase of the first. *Going* and *way* are common figures for the course of life. *A way not good* is a litotes or meiosis for a bad or for the worst way. (See Ps. 36 : 4. Ezek. 36 : 31.) *Thoughts*, not opinions merely, but devices and inventions of wickedness. (See above, on ch. 55 : 7.) With this description compare that of Moses, Deut. 32 : 5, 6.

3. *The people angering me to my face continually, sacrificing in the gardens, and censuring on the bricks.* We have now a more detailed description of the *way not good*, and the *devices* mentioned in the foregoing verse. The construction is continued, *the people provoking me* etc. being in direct apposition with the *rebellious people going* etc. *To my face*, not secretly or timidly (Job 31 : 27), but openly and in defiance of me (ch. 3 : 9. Job 1 : 11), which is probably the meaning of *before me* in the first commandment (Ex. 20 : 3). Animal offerings and fumigations are combined to represent all kinds of sacrifice. As to the idolatrous use of groves and gardens, see above, on ch. 57 : 5. The Hebrew word *garden* denotes any enclosed and carefully cultivated ground, whether chiefly occupied by trees or not. Of the last words, *on the bricks*, there are four interpretations. The first is that of many older writers, who suppose an allusion to the prohibition in Exod. 20 : 24, 25. But bricks are not there mentioned, and can hardly come under the description of "hewn stone," besides the doubt which overhangs the application of that law, and especially the cases in which it was meant to operate. A second explanation supposes bricks to mean roofing tiles (Mark 2 : 4. Luke 5 : 19), and the phrase to be descriptive of idolatry as practised on the roofs of houses (2 Kings 23 : 12.

Jer. 19 : 13. 32 : 29. Zeph. 1 : 5.) A third supposes an allusion to some practice now unknown, but possibly connected with the curiously inscribed bricks found in modern times near the site of ancient Babylon. Much the simplest and most natural supposition is, that the phrase means nothing more than altars, or at most altars slightly and hastily constructed. Of such altars bricks may be named as the materials, or tiles as the superficial covering.

4. *Sitting in the graves, and in the holes they will lodge, eating the flesh of swine, and broth of filthy things (is in) their vessels.* All agree that this verse is intended to depict in revolting colours the idolatrous customs of the people. Nor is there much doubt as to the construction of the sentence, or the force of the particular expressions. But the obscurity which overhangs the usage referred to has originated various archæological discussions which throw no light on the drift of the passage, nor even on the literal translation of the words, but are investigated merely for their own sake or their bearing upon other objects. Such are the questions, whether these idolaters sat in the graves or among them ; whether for necromantic purposes, i. e. to interrogate the dead, or to perform sacrificial rites to their memory, or to obtain demoniacal inspiration ; whether the Hebrew word means monuments, or caves, or temples ; whether these were lodged in for licentious purposes, or to obtain prophetic dreams ; whether they are charged with simply eating pork for food, or after it had been sacrificed to idols ; whether swine's flesh was forbidden for medicinal reasons, or because the heathen sacrificed and ate it, or on other grounds ; whether פֶּתֶחַ means broth or bits of meat, and if the former, whether it was so called on account of the bread broken in it, or for other reasons, etc. The only question of grammatical construction which has found a place among these topics of pedantic disquisition is of small importance with respect to the interpreta-

tion of the passage. It is the question whether *vesse.s* is to be governed by a preposition understood or explained as an accusative of place, or as the predicate of the proposition, *broth of abominable meats are their vessels*. Even if we should successively adopt and then discard every one of the opinions some of which have now been mentioned, the essential meaning of the verse would still remain the same, as a highly wrought description of idolatrous abominations.

5. *The (men) saying, Keep to thyself, come not near to me, for I am holy to thee, these (are) a smoke in my wrath, a fire burning all the day (or every day).* The literal translation of the second phrase is *approach to thyself*, implying removal from the speaker. The common English version (*stand by thyself*) suggests an idea not contained in the original, viz. that of standing alone, whereas all that is expressed by the Hebrew phrase is the act of standing away from the speaker, for which Lowth has found the idiomatic equivalent (*keep to thyself*). Another unusual expression is the one which may be represented by the English words, *I am holy thee*, i. e. *I am holy with respect to thee*; and as this implies comparison, the same sense is attained as by the old construction. As to the question who are here described, there are two main opinions: first, that the clause relates to the idolaters mentioned in the foregoing verses; the other, that it is descriptive of a wholly different class. The latter explanation is substantially the true one. The great end which the Prophet had in view was to describe the unbelieving Jews as abominable in the sight of God. His manner of expressing this idea is poetical, by means of figures drawn from various periods of their history, without intending to exhibit either of these periods exclusively. To a Hebrew writer, what could be more natural than to express the idea of religious corruption by describing its subjects as idolaters, diviners, eaters of swine's flesh, worshippers of outward forms, and self-righteous hypocrites? Of such



the text declares God's abhorrence. Smoke and fire may be taken as natural concomitants and parallel figures, as if he had said, against whom my wrath smokes and burns continually. Or the smoke may represent the utter consumption of the object, and the fire the means by which it is effected, which appears to have been Luther's idea.

6, 7. *Lo, it is written before me. I will not rest except I repay and I will repay into their bosom your iniquities and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith Jehovah, who buried incense on the mountains and on the hills blasphemed me, and I will measure their first work into their bosom.* The particle at the beginning calls attention both to the magnitude and certainty of the event about to be predicted. The figure of writing has been variously understood. Some think that what is said to be written is the eternal law of retribution. Others understand by it a *book of remembrance* (Mal. 3 : 16), i. e. a record of the sins referred to afterwards, by which they are kept perpetually present to the memory of Jehovah (Daniel 7 : 10). Most later writers understand by it a record, not of the crime, but of its punishment, or rather of the purpose or decree to punish it (Dan. 5 : 5, 24), in reference to the written judgments of the ancient courts (ch. 10 : 1). This last interpretation does not necessarily involve the supposition that the thing here said to be written is the threatening which immediately follows, although this is by no means an unnatural construction. *I will not rest or be silent*, an expression used repeatedly before in reference to the seeming inaction or indifference of Jehovah. (See above, ch. 42 : 14. 57 : 11, and compare Ps. 50 : 21. Hab. 1 : 13.) For *repay into their bosom*, we have in the seventh verse *measure into their bosom*, which affords a clue to the origin and real meaning of the figure ; as we read that Boaz said to Ruth, Bring the veil (or cloak) that is upon thee and held it, and she held it, and he measured six (measures of) barley and laid it on her



(Ruth 3 : 15). Hence the phrase to measure into any one's bosom, i. e. into the lap or the fold of the garment covering the bosom. (See above, on ch. 49 : 22.) The same figure is employed by Jer. 32 : 18 and in Ps. 79 : 12, and has been explained as implying abundance, or a greater quantity than one could carry in the hand. (Compare Luke 6 : 38.) But others understand the main idea to be not that of abundance, but of retribution, anything being said to return into one's own bosom, just as it is elsewhere said to return upon his own head (Judg. 9 : 57. Ps. 7 : 16). Both these accessory ideas are appropriate in the case before us. The sudden change from *their* to *your* at the beginning of v. 7, has been commonly explained as an example of the enallage personae so frequently occurring in Isaiah. This supposition is undoubtedly sufficient to remove all difficulty from the syntax. It is possible, however, that the change is not a mere grammatical anomaly or license of construction, but significant, and intended to distinguish between three generations. I will repay into their bosom (that of your descendants) your iniquities and the iniquities of your fathers. If this be not a fanciful distinction, it gives colour to the opinion that the previous description brings to view successively the gross idolatry of early times and the pharisaical hypocrisy prevailing at the time of Christ. Supposing his contemporaries to be the immediate objects of address, there would then be a distinct allusion to their idolatrous progenitors, the measure of whose guilt they filled up (Matt. 23 : 32), and to their children, upon whom it was to be conspicuously visited (Luke 23 : 28). But whether this be so or not, the meaning of the text is obvious, as teaching that the guilt which had accumulated through successive generations should be visited, though not exclusively, upon the last. The whole of idolatry is here summed up in *burning incense on the mountains*, which are elsewhere mentioned as a favourite resort of those who worshipped idols (ch. 57 : 7 Jer. 3 : 6. Ez. 6 : 13. 18 : 6. Hos. 4 : 13), and *blaspheming God*

*upon the hills*, which may either be regarded as a metaphorical description of idolatry itself, or strictly taken to denote the oral expression of contempt for Jehovah and his worship, which might naturally be expected to accompany such practices. *Their former work*, i. e. its product or reward, as in ch. 40 : 10. (See above, p. 77.) The only sense in which it can be thus described is that of ancient, as distinguished not from the subsequent transgressions of the fathers, but from those of the children who came after them. According to the sense which the Apostle puts upon the two first verses of this chapter, we may understand those now before us as predicting the excision of the Jews from the communion of the church and from their covenant relation to Jehovah, as a testimony of his sore displeasure on account of the unfaithfulness and manifold transgressions of that chosen race throughout its former history, but also on account of the obstinate and spiteful unbelief with which so many later generations have rejected the Messiah, for whose sake alone they ever had a national existence and enjoyed so many national advantages.

8. *Thus saith Jehovah, As (when) juice is found in the cluster and one says, Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it, so will I do for the sake of my servants, not to destroy the whole. A blessing is in it* seems to mean something more than that it has some value. The idea meant to be suggested is, that God has blessed it, and that man should therefore not destroy it. The image presented by the Prophet is that of a good cluster in which juice is found while others are unripe or rotten. *I will do* is by some understood as meaning *I will act*, or I will cause it to be so ; but this is not the usage of the Hebrew verb, which rather means precisely what the English *I will do* denotes in such connections, i. e. I will do so, or will act in the same manner. *My servants* is by some understood to mean the patriarchs, *the fathers*, for whose sake Israel was still be

loved (Rom. 11 : 28). It is more natural, however, to apply it to the remnant according to the election of grace (Rom. 11 : 5), the true believers represented by the ripe and juicy cluster in the foregoing simile. The construction of the last words is the same as in ch. 48 : 9. *The whole* is a literal translation of the Hebrew phrase, and at once more exact and more expressive than the common version, *them all*.

9. *And I will bring forth from Jacob a seed and from Judah an heir of my mountains, and my chosen ones shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.* This is an amplification of the promise, *I will do so*, in the foregoing verse. *My mountains* denotes the whole of Palestine, as being an uneven, hilly country. See the same use of the plural in ch. 14 : 25, and the analogous phrase, *mountains of Israel*, repeatedly employed by Ezekiel (36 : 1, 8. 38 : 8). The corresponding singular, *my mountain* (ch. 11 : 9. 57 : 13), is by many understood in the same manner. The adverb at the end of the sentence properly means *thither*, and is never perhaps put for *there* except in cases where a change of place is previously mentioned or implied. If so, the sense is not merely that they shall abide there, but that they shall first go or return thither, which in this connection is peculiarly appropriate. Of the promise here recorded there are three principal interpretations. The first, embraced by nearly all the modern Germans, is that the verse predicts the restoration of the Jews from Babylon. The second may be stated in the words of Henderson, viz. that "the future happy occupation of Palestine by a regenerated race of Jews is here clearly predicted." The third is that the verse foretells the perpetuation of the old theocracy or Jewish church; not in the body of the nation, but in the remnant which believed on Christ; and which, enlarged by the accession of the gentiles, is identical in character and rights with the church of the old dispensation, the heir to all its promises,

and this among the rest, which either has been or is to be fulfilled both in a literal and figurative sense ; in the latter, because the Church already has what is essentially equivalent to the possession of the land of Canaan under a local ceremonial system ; in the former, because Palestine is yet to be recovered from the Paynim and the Infidel, and rightfully occupied, if not by Jews, by Christians, as the real seed of Abraham, partakers of the same faith and heirs of the same promise (Heb. 11 : 9) ; for the promise that he should be the heir of the world was not to Abraham, or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith (Rom. 4 : 13). If it should please God to collect the natural descendants of the patriarch in that land and convert them in a body to the true faith, there would be an additional coincidence between the prophecy and the event, even in minor circumstances, such as we often find in the history of Christ. But if no such national restoration of the Jews to Palestine should ever happen, the extension of the true religion over that benighted region, which both prophecy and providence encourage us to look for, would abundantly redeem the pledge which God has given to his people in this and other parts of Scripture.

10. *And Sharon shall be for (or become) a home of flocks, and the Valley of Achor a lair of herds, for my people who have sought me.* This is a repetition of the promise in the foregoing verse, rendered more specific by the mention of one kind of prosperity, viz. that connected with the raising of cattle, and of certain places where it should be specially enjoyed, viz. the valley of Achor and the plain of Sharon. Two reasons have been given for the mention of these places, one derived from their position, the other from their quality. As the valley of Achor was near Jericho and Jordan, and the plain of Sharon on the Mediterranean, between Joppa and Cesarea, some suppose that they are here combined to signify the whole breadth

of the land, from East to West. And as Sharon was proverbial for its verdure and fertility (see above, ch 33 : 9. 35 : 2), it is inferred by some that Achor was so likewise, which they think is the more probable because Hosea says that the valley of Achor shall be a door of hope (Hos. 2 : 15). But this may have respect to the calamity which Israel experienced there at his first entrance on the land of promise (Josh. 7 : 26), so that where his troubles then began his hopes shall now begin. For these or other reasons Sharon and Achor are here mentioned, in Isaiah's characteristic manner, as samples of the whole land, or its pastures, just as flocks and herds are used as images of industry and wealth, derived from the habits of the patriarchal age. That this is the correct interpretation of the flocks and herds, is not disputed even by the very writers who insist upon the literal construction of the promise that the seed of Jacob shall possess the land, as ensuring the collection of the Jews into the region which their fathers once inhabited. That to *seek Jehovah* sometimes has specific reference to repentance and conversion, on the part of those who have been alienated from him, may be seen by a comparison of ch. 9 : 12 (13) and 55 : 6.

11. *And (as for) you, forsakers of Jehovah, the (men) forgetting my holy mountain, the (men) setting for Fortune a table, and the (men) filling for Fate a mingled draught.* This is only a description of the object of address ; the address itself is contained in the next verse. The class of persons meant are first described as forsakers of Jehovah and forgetters of his holy mountain. The description of the same persons in the last clause is much more obscure, and has occasioned a vast amount of learned disquisition and discussion. Many interpreters have understood the two most important words as common nouns denoting *trump* and *number* (the former being the sense put upon the name *Gad*, in Gen. 30 : 11), and referred the whole clause either to convivial assemblies, perhaps connected



with idolatrous worship, or to the troop of planets and the multitude of stars, as objects of such worship. But as the most essential words in this case are supplied, the later writers, while they still suppose the objects worshipped to be here described, explain the descriptive terms in a different manner. Luther retains the Hebrew names *Gad* and *Meni*, which are also given in the margin of the English Bible; but most interpreters explain them by equivalents. One opinion is that *Gad* is the planet Jupiter (identical with *Bel* or *Baal*), and *Meni* the planet Venus (identical with *Ashtoreth*), which are called in the old Arabian mythology the Greater and Lesser Fortune or Good Luck, while Saturn and Mars were known as the Greater and Lesser Evil Fortune or Ill Luck. Others understand the planets here intended to be Jupiter and Saturn; others still the Sun and Moon. Amidst this diversity of theories and explanations it is satisfactory to find that there is perfect unanimity upon the only point of exegetical importance, namely, that the passage is descriptive of idolatrous worship. This being settled, the details still doubtful can be interesting only to the philologist and antiquarian. The kind of offering described is supposed to be identical with the *lectisternia* of the Roman writers, which consisted in the spreading of a feast for the consumption of the gods. Herodotus mentions a *τραπέζα ἡλίου* (table of the sun) as known in Egypt; and Jeremiah twice connects this usage with the worship of the queen of heaven. (Jer. 7:18 44:17.) The last word in Hebrew denotes *mixture*, and may either mean spiced wine, or a compound of different liquors, or a mere preparation or infusion of one kind. (See above, on ch. 5:22.) As to the application of the passage, there is the usual division of opinion among the adherents of the different hypotheses. The true sense of the passage seems to be the same as in vs. 3-7, where the Prophet contemplates his description of the wickedness of Israel, by circumstances drawn from different



periods of his history, such as the idolatrous period, the pharisaical period, etc.

12. *And I have numbered you to the sword, and all of you to the slaughter shall bow ; because I called and ye did not answer, I spake and ye did not hear, and ye did the (thing that was) evil in my eyes, and that which I desired not ye chose.* The strict sense of numbering or counting is not only admissible, but necessary to express a portion of the writer's meaning, namely, the idea that they should be cut off one by one, or rather one with another, i. e. all without exception. (See ch. 27 : 12.) In the use of the Hebrew verb to *number* there is evident allusion to its derivative in the preceding verse, which some of the German writers try to make perceptible to German readers by combining cognate nouns and verbs. The same effect, if it were worth the while, might be produced in English by the use of *destiny* and *destine*. Bowing or stooping to the slaughter is submitting to it either willingly or by compulsion. The remainder of the verse assigns the reason of the threatened punishment. The first expression bears a strong resemblance to the words of Wisdom, in Prov. 1 : 24-31. As to the application of the words, there is the usual confidence and contradiction ; but the most probable explanation is that which understands the passage as predicting the excision of the Jewish nation from the Church, not only for the crowning-sin of rejecting Christ, but for their aggregate offences as idolaters and hypocrites, as rebels against God and despisers of his mercy, with which sins they are often charged in the Old Testament (e. g. ch. 50 : 2. 65 : 2. 66 : 4. Jer. 7 : 13, 26), and still more pointedly by Christ himself in several of his parables and other discourses, some of which remarkably resemble that before us both in sentiment and language. (See Matt. 23 : 37. 22 : 7. Luke 19 : 27, and compare Acts 13 : 46.) Besides the countenance which this analogy affords to this exposition, it is

strongly recommended by its strict agreement with what we have determined, independently of this place, to be the true sense of the whole foregoing context. Interpreted by these harmonious analogies, the verse, instead of threatening the destruction of the Babylonish Jews before the advent, or of the wicked Jews and Antichrist hereafter, is a distinct prediction of a far more critical event than either, the judicial separation of the Jewish nation and the Israel of God, which had for ages seemed inseparable, not to say identical.

13, 14. *Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Lo ! my servants shall eat and ye shall hunger ; lo, my servants shall drink and ye shall thirst ; lo, my servants shall rejoice and ye shall be ashamed ; lo, my servants shall shout from gladness of heart, and ye shall cry from grief of heart, and from brokenness of spirit ye shall howl.* These verses merely carry out the general threatening of the one preceding, in a series of poetical antitheses, where hunger, thirst, disgrace, and anguish, take the place of sword and slaughter, and determine these to be symbolical or emblematic terms. The same metaphors are often used to signify spiritual joy and horror, not only in the Prophets (see above, ch. 8 : 21. 33 : 16. 55 : 1. 58 : 14), but by our Saviour when he speaks of his disciples as eating bread in the kingdom of heaven, where many shall come from the east and the west, and sit down (or recline at table) with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Matt. 8 : 11) ; and ascribes to the king in the parable the solemn declaration, I say unto you none of those men that were hidden shall taste of my supper (Luke 14 : 24). Thus understood, the passage is a solemn prediction of happiness to the believing and of misery to the unbelieving Jews. The latter are directly addressed, the former designated as *my servants*. *Gladness of heart*, literally goodness of heart, which in our idiom would express a different idea, on account of our predominant use of the first word in a moral sense. For the

Hebrew expression see Deut. 28 : 47. Judg. 19 : 6, 22. For *brokenness of spirit*, compare ch. 61 : 1 and Ps. 51 : 17. To be ashamed, as often elsewhere, includes disappointment and frustration of hope.

15. *Ana ye shall leave your name for an oath to my chosen ones, and the Lord Jehovah shall slay thee, and shall call his servants by another name* (literally, call another name to them). The object of address is still the body of the Jewish nation, from which the believing remnant are distinguished by the names *my chosen* and *my servants*. *Oath* is here put for curse, as it is added to it in Dan. 9 : 11, and the two are combined in Num. 5 : 21, where the *oath of cursing* may be regarded as the complete expression of which *oath* is here an ellipsis. To leave one's name for a curse, according to Old Testament usage, is something more than to leave it to be cursed. The sense is that the name shall be used as a formula of cursing, so that men shall be able to wish nothing worse to others than a like character and fate. This is clear from Jer. 29 : 22 compared with Zech. 3 : 2, as well as from the converse or correlative promise to the patriarchs and their children that a like use should be made of their names as a formula of blessing (Gen. 22 : 18. 48 : 20). As in other cases where the use of names is the subject of discourse, there is no need of supposing that any actual practice is predicted, but merely that the character and fate of those addressed will be so bad as justly to admit of such an application. As the phrase *your name* shows that the object of address is a plurality of persons bearing one name, or in other words an organized community, so the singular form *slay thee* is entirely appropriate to this collective or ideal person. Of the last clause there are three interpretations. The rabbinical expounders understand it as the converse of the other clause. As *your name* is to be a name of cursing, so *my servants* are to have another name, i. e. a name of blessing, or

a name by which men shall bless. Others give it a more general sense, as meaning their condition shall be altogether different. A third opinion is that it relates to the substitution of the Christian name for that of Jew, as a distinctive designation of God's people. The full sense of the clause can only be obtained by combining all these explanations, or at least a part of each. The first is obviously implied, if not expressed. The second is established by analogy and usage, and the almost unanimous consent of all interpreters. The only question is in reference to the last, which is of course rejected with contempt by the neologists, and regarded as fanciful by some Christian writers. These have been influenced in part by the erroneous assumption that if this is not the whole sense of the words, it cannot be a part of it. But this is only true in cases where the two proposed are incompatible. The true state of the case is this: According to the usage of the prophecies the promise of another name imports a different character and state, and in this sense the promise has been fully verified. But in addition to this general fulfilment, which no one calls in question, it is matter of history that the Jewish commonwealth or nation is destroyed; that the name of Jew has been for centuries a by-word and a formula of execration, and that they who have succeeded to the spiritual honours of this once favoured race, although they claim historical identity therewith, have never borne its name, but another, which from its very nature could have no existence until Christ had come, and which in the common parlance of the Christian world is treated as the opposite of Jew. Now all this must be set aside as mere fortuitous coincidence, or it must be accounted for precisely in the same way that we all account for similar coincidences between the history of Christ and the Old Testament in minor points, where all admit that the direct sense of the prophecy is more extensive. As examples, may be mentioned John the Baptist's preaching in a literal wilder

ness, our Saviour's riding on a literal ass, his literally opening the eyes of the blind, when it is evident to every reader of the original passage that it predicts events of a far more extensive and more elevated nature. While I fully believe that this verse assures God's servants of a very different fate from that of the unbelieving Jews, I have no doubt that it also has respect to the destruction of the Jewish state and the repudiation of its name by the true church or Israel of God.

16. (*By*) *which the (man) blessing himself in the land (or earth) shall bless himself by the God of truth, and (by which) the (man) swearing in the land (or earth) shall swear by the God of truth, because forgotten are the former enmities (or troubles), and because they are hidden from my eyes.* Two things have divided and perplexed interpreters in this verse, as it stands connected with the one before it. The first is the apparent change of subject, and the writer's omission to record the new name which had just been promised. The other is the very unusual construction of the relative. The first of these has commonly been left without solution, or referred to the habitual freedom of the writer. The other has been variously but very unsuccessfully explained. All objections may be obviated by referring the relative to an expressed antecedent, viz. name, a construction given both in the Septuagint and Vulgate versions, although otherwise defective and obscure. Another advantage of this construction is that it removes the abrupt transition and supplies the name, which seems on any other supposition to be wanting. According to this view of the place, the sense is that the people shall be called after the God of truth, so that his name and theirs shall be identical, and consequently whoever blesses or swears by the one blesses or swears by the other also. The form in which this idea is expressed is peculiar, but intelligible and expressive: 'His people he shall call by another name, which (i. e. with respect to which, or more specifically by



which) he that blesseth shall bless by the God of truth,' etc. Most interpreters understand by blessing himself, praying for God's blessing, and by swearing, the solemn invocation of his presence as a witness, both being mentioned as acts of religious worship and of solemn recognition.  $\text{יְשׁוּעַ}$  is properly an adjective meaning *sure*, trustworthy, and therefore including the ideas of reality and faithfulness, neither of which should be excluded, and both of which are comprehended in the English phrase, the true God, or retaining more exactly the form of the original, *the God of truth*. This Hebrew word is retained in the Greek of the New Testament, not only as a particle of asseveration, but in a still more remarkable manner as a name of Christ (Rev. 1. 18. 3 : 14), with obvious reference to the case before us ; and there must be something more than blind chance in the singular coincidence thus brought to light between this application of the phrase and the sense which has been put upon the foregoing verse, as relating to the adoption of the Christian name by the church or chosen people. As applied to Christ, the name has been well explained to describe him as *very God*, as a witness to the truth, as the substance or reality of the legal shadows, and as the fulfiller of the divine promises. The last clause gives the reason for the application of the title, God of truth, viz because in his deliverance of his people he will prove himself to be the true God in both senses, truly divine and eminently faithful. This proof will be afforded by the termination of those evils which the sins of his own people once rendered necessary.

17. *For lo I (am) creating (or about to create) new heavens and a new earth, and the former (things) shall not be remembered, and shall not come up into the mind (literally, on the heart).* Of the whole verse there are several distinct interpretations. One understands it as predicting an improvement in the air and soil, conducive to longevity and uninterrupted health ; just as a mod



ern writer might describe the vast improvement in any European country since ancient times, by saying that the heaven and the earth are new. A second explanation of the verse is that which makes it a prediction of the renovation of the present earth with its skies, etc. after the day of judgment. A third is that which regards it as a figurative prophecy of changes in the church, according to a certain systematic explication of the several parts of the material universe as symbols. Better than all these, because requiring less to be assumed, and more in keeping with the usage of prophetic language, is the explanation of the verse as a promise or prediction of entire change in the existing state of things, the precise nature of the change and of the means by which it shall be brought about forming no part of the revelation here. That the words are not inapplicable to a revolution of a moral and spiritual nature, we may learn from Paul's analogous description of the change wrought in conversion (2 Cor. 5 : 17. Gal. 6 : 15), and from Peter's application of this very passage. "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness (2 Peter 3 : 13)" That the words have such a meaning even here, is rendered probable by the last clause, the oblivion of the former state of things being much more naturally connected with moral and spiritual changes than with one of a material nature.

18. *But rejoice and be glad unto eternity (in) that which I (am) creating, for lo I (am) creating Jerusalem a joy, and her people a rejoicing, i. e. a subject or occasion of it.* It would be highly arbitrary to explain *what I create* in this place, as different from the creation in the verse preceding. It is there said that a creation shall take place. It is here enjoined upon God's people to rejoice in it. But here the creation is declared to be the making of Jerusalem a joy and Israel a rejoicing. Now the whole analogy of the foregoing prophecies leads to the conclu-

sion that this means the exaltation of the church or chosen people ; and the same analogy admits of that exaltation being represented as a revolution in the frame of nature. On the other hand, a literal prediction of new heavens and new earth would scarcely have been followed by a reference merely to the church ; and if Jerusalem and Zion be explained to mean the literal Jerusalem and the restored Jews, the only alternative is then to conclude that as soon as they return to Palestine, it and the whole earth are to be renewed, or else that what relates to Jerusalem and Israel is literal, and what relates to the heavens and the earth metaphorical, although, as we have just seen, the connection of the verses renders it necessary to regard the two events as one. From all these incongruities we are relieved by understanding the whole passage as a poetical description of a complete and glorious change.

19. *And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people ; and there shall not be heard in her again the voice of weeping and the voice of crying.* Considered as the language of the Prophet himself, this would express his sympathetic interest in the joyous changes which awaited his people. But such an application would be wholly arbitrary, as Jehovah is undoubtedly the speaker in the foregoing verse, where he claims creative power ; and even here there is an implication of divine authority in the promise that weeping shall no more be heard in her. There is something very beautiful in the association of ideas here expressed. God shall rejoice in his people, and they shall rejoice with him. They shall no longer know what grief is, because he shall cease to grieve over them ; their former distresses shall be forgotten by them and forever hidden from his eyes.

20. *There shall be no more from there an infant of days, and an old man who shall not fulfil his days ; for the child a hundred years old shall die, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be*

*accursed.* The strict translation *thence* (*from there*) is not only admissible but necessary to the sense. It does not, however, mean springing or proceeding thence, but taken away thence, or carried thence to burial. It thus denotes that none shall die there in infancy. All the modern writers are agreed as to the literal meaning of this last clause, though they differ as to the relation of its parts. Some regard it as a synonymous parallelism, and understand the sense to be that he who dies a hundred years old will be considered as dying young, and by a special curse from God, interrupting the ordinary course of nature. Others make the parallelism antithetic, and contrast the child with the sinner. Perhaps the true view of the passage is, that it resumes the contrast drawn in vs. 13–15 between the servants of Jehovah and the sinners there addressed. Vs. 16–19 may then be regarded as a parenthetical amplification. As if he had said: My servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry; my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty; my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall mourn; my servants shall be just beginning life when ye are driven out of it; among the former, he who dies a hundred years old shall die a child; among you, he who dies at the same age shall die accursed. On the whole, however, the most natural meaning is the one already mentioned as preferred by most modern writers. Premature death, and even death in a moderate old age, shall be unknown; he who dies a hundred years old shall be considered either as dying in childhood, or as cut off by a special malediction. The whole is a highly poetical description of longevity, to be explained precisely like the promise of new heavens and a new earth in v. 17.

21, 22. *And they shall build houses and inhabit (them), and shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them, they shall not build and another inhabit, they shall not plant and another eat; for as the days of a tree (shall be) the days of my people, and the work of their hands my chosen ones shall wear out (or survive.) This is a*

promise of security and permanent enjoyment, clothed in expressions drawn from the promises and threatenings of the Mosaic law. By the age of a tree is generally understood the great age which some species are said to attain, such as the oak, the banyan, etc. The essential idea is in that of permanent continuance, and the figures here used to express it make it still more probable that in the whole foregoing context the predictions are to be figuratively understood.

23. *They shall not labour in vain, and they shall not bring forth for terror; for the seed of the blessed of Jehovah are they, and their offspring with them.* The sense of sudden destruction given to בְּהִלָּה by some modern writers, is a mere conjecture from the context, and no more correct than the translation *curse*, which others derive from an Arabic analogy. The Hebrew word properly denotes extreme agitation and alarm, and the meaning of the clause is that they shall not bring forth children merely to be subjects of distressing solicitude.

24. *And it shall be (or come to pass), that they shall not yet have called and I will answer, yet (shall) they (be) speaking and I will hear.* A strong expression of God's readiness to hear and answer prayer, not a mere promise that it shall be heard (like that in Jer. 29 : 12. Zech. 13 : 9), but an assurance that it shall be granted before it is heard. The nearest parallel is Matt. 6 : 8, where our Lord himself says, Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. (Compare ch. 30 : 19. 58 : 9. Ps. 145 : 18, 19.)

25. *The wolf and the lamb shall feed as one, and the lion like the ox shall eat straw, and the serpent dust (for) his food. They shall not hurt and they shall not corrupt (or destroy) in all my holy mountain, saith Jehovah.* The promise of a happy change is wound up in the most appropriate manner by repeating the

prophecy in ch. 11 : 6-9, that all hurtful influences shall for ever cease in the holy hill or church of God. Some suppose an allusion to the popular belief that serpents feed on dust because they creep upon the ground, and understand the prophecy to be that they shall henceforth be contented with this food and cease to prey on men or other animals. But this would be too low a promise for the context, since a very small part of the evils which men suffer can arise from this cause. The true sense seems to be that in accordance with the serpent's ancient doom, he shall be rendered harmless, robbed of his favourite nutriment, and made to bite the dust at the feet of his conqueror. (Gen. 3 : 15. Rom. 16 : 20. 1 John 3 : 8. Compare Isaiah 49 : 24.) The last clause resolves the figures of the first. The verbs are therefore to be understood indefinitely, as in ch. 11 : 9; or if they be referred to the animals previously mentioned, it is only a symbolical or tropical expression of the same idea. The form of expression is the same in either case, except that what begins a verse in the eleventh chapter here concludes one.

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## CHAPTER LXVI.

THIS chapter winds up the prophetic discourse with an express prediction of the change of dispensations, and a description of the difference between them. Jehovah will no longer dwell in temples made with hands, v. 1. Every sincere and humble heart shall be his residence, v. 2. The ancient sacrifices, though divinely instituted, will henceforth be as hateful as the rites of idolatry, v. 3. They who still cling to the abrogated ritual will be fearfully but righteously requited, v. 4.

The true Israel, cast out by these deluded sinners, shall ere long be glorified, and the carnal Israel fearfully rewarded, vs. 5, 6. The ancient Zion may already be seen travailing with a new and glorious dispensation, vs. 7-9. They who mourned for her seeming desolation now rejoice in her abundance and her honour, vs. 10-14. At the same time the carnal Israel shall be destroyed, as apostates and idolaters, vs. 14-17. The place which they once occupied shall now be filled by the elect from all nations, v. 18. To gather these, a remnant of the ancient Israel shall go forth among the gentiles, v. 19. They shall come from every quarter and by every method of conveyance, v. 20. They shall be admitted to the sacerdotal honours of the chosen people, v. 21. This new dispensation is not to be temporary, like the one before it, but shall last forever, v. 22. While the spiritual Israel is thus replenished from all nations, the apostate Israel shall perish by a lingering decay in the sight of an astonished world, vs. 23, 24.

1. *Thus saith Jehovah, The heavens (are) my throne, and the earth my footstool ; where is (or what is) the house which ye will build for me, and where is (or what is) the place of my rest ?* literally, *the place my rest*, i. e. the place which is or can be my rest or permanent abode. The same term is elsewhere applied to the temple, as distinguished from the tabernacle or moveable sanctuary. (See 2 Sam. 7 : 6. 2 Chron. 6 : 41. Ps. 132 : 8.) All interpreters agree that this question implies disapprobation of the building, as at variance with the great truth propounded in the first clause, namely, that the frame of nature is the only material temple worthy of Jehovah. This obvious relation of the clauses is sufficient of itself to set aside two of the old interpretations of the passage. The first is that which supposes that this chapter is a counterpart to the first, and that the Prophet here recurs to his original theme, the corruptions and abuses of his own age. But besides the undisputed



references to the future in the latter part of this very chapter it has been conclusively objected to the theory in question, that in the reigns of Ahaz and Hezekiah there could be no thought of building or rebuilding, nor even of repairing or adorning the temple, but rather of despoiling it. (2 Kings 16: 17, 18. 18: 15.) The same objection lies against the theory, that this chapter was intended to console the pious Jews who were debarred from the customary public worship during the profanation of the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes. In neither of these cases could there be occasion for objecting to the building or rebuilding of the temple. That exposition is most probably the true one which assumes the most intimate connection of the chapters here, and is least dependent upon forced divisions and arbitrary intervals crowded with imaginary facts, e g. that in the interval between these chapters the tribes of Benjamin and Judah had resolved to exclude the others from all participation in the rebuilding of the temple, and that the passage now before us was intended to reprove them for their want of charity; as if this end could be accomplished by proclaiming the worthlessness of all material temples, which is tantamount to saying, why do you refuse to let your countrymen assist in the rebuilding of the temple, since no temples are of any value? The best refutation of this and other forced interpretations is afforded by a simple statement of the true sense. Having held up in every point of view the true design, mission, and vocation of the church or chosen people, its relation to the natural descendants of Abraham, the causes which required that the latter should be stripped of their peculiar privileges, and the vocation of the Gentiles as a part of the divine plan from its origin, the Prophet now addresses the apostate and unbelieving Jews at the close of the old dispensation, who, instead of preparing for the general extension of the church and the exchange of ceremonial for spiritual worship, were engaged in the rebuilding and costly decoration of

the temple at Jerusalem. The pride and interest in this great public work, felt not only by the Herods but by all the Jews, is clear from incidental statements of the Scriptures (John 2 : 20. Matt. 24 : 1), as well as from the ample and direct assertions of Josephus. That the nation should have been thus occupied precisely at the time when the Messiah came, is one of those agreements between prophecy and history which cannot be accounted for except upon the supposition of a providential and designed assimilation. To the benefit of this coincidence the exposition which has last been given is entitled, and by means of it the probabilities, already great, may be said to be converted into certainties, or if anything more be needed for this purpose it will be afforded by the minuter points of similarity which will be presented in the course of the interpretation. One advantage of this exposition is that it accounts for the inference here drawn from a doctrine which was known to Solomon and publicly announced by him (1 Kings 8 : 27). It may be asked, then, why this truth did not forbid the erection of the temple at first, as well as its gorgeous reconstruction in the time of Christ. The answer is, that it was necessary for a temporary purpose, but when this temporary purpose was accomplished it became not only useless but unlawful. Henceforth the worship was to be a spiritual worship, the church universally diffused, and the material sanctuary no longer an earthly residence for God but a convenient place of meeting for his people.

2. *And all these my own hand made, and all these were (or are), saith Jehovah ; and to this one will I look, to the afflicted and contrite in spirit and trembling at my word.* By all these it is universally admitted that we are to understand the heavens and the earth, of which he claims to be not only the sovereign, as in the preceding verse, but the creator. The next expression may be differently understood. The reference in the first

clause is to the time of actual creation, *my hand made them and they were*, i. e. began to be. (See Gen. 1 : 3. Ps. 33 : 9.) Both tenses of the verb are combined to express the same idea in Rev. 4 : 11. It is important to the just interpretation of these verses to observe the climax in them. First the temples made by men are contrasted with the great material temple of the universe; then this is itself disparaged by Jehovah as his own handiwork, and still more in comparison with a nobler temple of a spiritual nature, the renewed and contrite heart (See ch. 57 : 15. 2 Cor. 6 : 16.) The same condescending favour is expressed for the same objects elsewhere. (Ps. 34 : 18. 138 : 6.) *To look to*, is to have regard to, and implies both approbation and affection. (See Gen. 4 : 4, 5. Ex. 2 : 25. Num. 16 : 15. Judg. 6 : 14. Ps. 25 : 16.) *Contrite or broken in heart or spirit* is a scriptural description of the subjects of divine grace in its humbling and subduing influences. (Ch. 61 : 1.)

3. *Slaying the ox, smiting a man—sacrificing the sheep, breaking a dog's neck—offering an oblation, blood of swine—making a memorial of incense, blessing vanity—also they have chosen their ways, and in their abominations has their soul delighted.* This translation, although scarcely English, will convey some idea of the singular form of the original, and render intelligible what is said as to the different constructions of the sentence. The first clause consists of four similar members, in each of which are coupled a form of sacrifice under the Mosaic law and an offering which according to that law was inadmissible and even revolting. The ox and the sheep represent the animal sacrifices, the *חֹטֶת* or meal-offering and the incense those of an unbloody nature. The verbs connected with these nouns are likewise all selected from the technical vocabulary of the law. *Memorial* is the technical name of a certain kind of offering, especially of incense (Lev. 24 : 7) with or without other vegetable substances (Num. 5 : 26), so called perhaps

because the fumes of the incense were conceived of as ascending into heaven and reminding God of the worshipper. The same figure was then transferred to prayers and other spiritual offerings. (See Acts 10 : 4.) *Smiting* has here, as often elsewhere, the emphatic sense of wounding mortally or killing. (Gen. 4 : 15. Ex. 2 : 12. Josh. 20 : 5. 1 Sam. 17 : 26.) The *dog* has ever been regarded in the east as peculiarly unclean, and in that light is coupled with the swine, not only in the Bible (Matt 7 : 6. 2 Pet. 2 : 22), but by Horace, who twice names dog and swine together as the vilest animals. *Swine's blood* alone is without a verb to govern it. The simplest course is to repeat the leading verb of the same member.  $\text{קָרַב}$  is commonly supposed to mean an idol, as it does in a few places; but it is better to retain its generic sense, as more expressive. This is by some understood to be vanity, nonentity, or worthlessness; as attributes of idols; by others, injustice or iniquity in general. The whole phrase is commonly explained to mean *blessing* (i. e. praising or worshipping) *an idol*, or *saluting* it by kissing (1 Kings 19 : 18. Job 31 : 27). The simplest syntax is to supply the verb of existence, and thus produce a series of short propositions: He that slays an ox smites a man, etc. The ancient versions all supply a particle of likeness—he that slays an ox is like one that murders a man, etc. This is adopted by most of the modern writers, but of late without supplying anything, the words being taken to assert not mere resemblance but identity, which is the strongest form of comparison. It is certainly more expressive to say that an offerer of cattle is a murderer, than to say that he is like one, though the latter may be after all the real meaning. He is a murderer, i. e. God so esteems him. The common interpretation is that the passage relates not to the actual practice of the abominations mentioned, but to the practice of iniquity in general, which renders the most regular and costly offerings as hateful to Jehovah as the most abominable rites of idolatry.

The general doctrine of the text is that sacrifice is hateful in the sight of God if offered in a wicked spirit, but with a special reference to those who still adhere to the old sacrifices after the great sacrifice for sin was come and had been offered once for all. Thus understood this verse extends to sacrifices that which the foregoing verses said of the temple, after the change of dispensations.

4. *I also will choose their vexations, and their fear I will bring upon them; because I called and there was no one answering, I spake and they did not hear, and they did evil in my eyes, and that which I delight not in they chose.* The larger part of this verse, from *because* to the end, is repeated from ch. 65 : 12, and serves not only to connect the passages as parts of an unbroken composition, but also to identify the subjects of discourse in the two places. The common version of the first Hebrew noun (*delusions*) seems to be founded on a misconception of the Vulgate (*illusiones*), which was probably intended to suggest the idea of derision like the *ἐμπαιγματα* of the Septuagint. It is in the cognate sense of petulance, caprice, that it is used to denote children in ch. 3 : 4. *Their fear* is the evil which they fear, as in Prov. 10 : 24, where the same idea is expressed almost in the same words.

5. *Hear the word of Jehovah, ye that tremble at his word. Your brethren say, (those) hating you and casting you out for my name's sake, Jehovah will be glorified and we shall gaze upon your joy—and they shall be ashamed* Trembling at (or rather to) Jehovah's word seems to mean reverently waiting for it. Ye that thus expect a message from Jehovah, now receive it. Hear the word (or promise) of Jehovah, ye that wait for it with trembling confidence: your brethren (the unconverted Jews) who hate you and cast you out for my name's sake, have said (in so doing), 'Jehovah will be glorious (or glorify him

self in your behalf no doubt), and we shall witness your 'salvation' (a bitter irony like that in ch. 5 : 19); but they (who thus speak) shall themselves be confounded (by beholding what they now consider so incredible). Besides the clearness and coherence of this exposition in itself considered, and its perfect harmony with what we have arrived at as the true sense of the whole foregoing context, it is strongly recommended by remarkable coincidences with the New Testament. That the unbelieving Jews might still be called the brethren of the converts, if it needed either proof or illustration, might derive it from Paul's mode of address to them in Acts 22 : 1, and of reference to them in Rom. 9 : 3. The phrase *those hating you* may be compared with John 15 : 18. 17 : 14. Matt. 10 : 22. 1 Thess. 2 : 14; *casting you out* with John 16 : 2; *for my name's sake* with Matt. 24 : 9; to which may be added the interesting fact that the verb נָקַד and its derivatives are used to this day by the Jews in reference to excommunication. Thus understood the verse is an assurance to the chosen remnant in whom the true Israel was to be perpetuated, that although their unbelieving countrymen might cast them out with scorn and hatred for a time, their spite should soon be utterly confounded. The great truth involved in the change of dispensations may be signally developed and exemplified hereafter, as in the case of the restored Jews who receive the doctrine of the gospel and their brethren who persist in endeavouring to establish the old ritual; but we must not on that account abandon the fulfilment which has actually taken place.

6. *A voice of tumult from the city! A voice from the temple! The voice of Jehovah, rendering requital to his enemies!* The Hebrew word נִקְצָץ is never applied elsewhere to a joyful cry or a cry of lamentation, but to the tumult of war, the rushing sound of armies and the shock of battle, in which sense it is re



peatedly employed by Isaiah. The enemies here mentioned must of course be those who had just been described as the despisers and persecutors of their brethren, and whose confusion after being threatened generally in the verse preceding is here graphically represented in detail. The description therefore cannot without violence be understood of foreign or external enemies. In strict adherence to the usage of the words and to the requisitions of the context, both immediate and remote, the verse may be applied to the giving up of Zion and the temple to its enemies, as a final demonstration that the old economy was at an end, and that the sins of Israel were now to be visited on that generation. The assailants of Jerusalem and of the Jews were now no longer those of God himself, but rather chosen instruments to execute his vengeance on his enemies, the unbelieving Jews themselves. The tumult comprehends the whole confusion of the siege and conquest, and a better commentary on this brief but grand prediction cannot be desired than that afforded by Josephus in his narrative of what may be regarded as not only the most dreadful siege on record but in some respects the most sublime and critical conjuncture in all history, because coincident with the transition from the abrogated system of the old economy to the acknowledged introduction of the new, a change of infinitely more extensive influence on human character and destiny than many philosophical historians have been willing to admit or even able to discover.

7. *Before she travailed she brought forth, before her pain came she was delivered of a male.* All interpreters agree that the mother here described is Zion, that the figure is essentially the same as in ch. 49 : 21, and that in both cases an increase of numbers is represented as a birth, while in that before us the additional idea of suddenness is expressed by the figure of an unexpected birth. The difference between the cases is that in the other a plurality of children is described, while in this the

whole increase is represented in the aggregate as a single birth. As to the specification of the sex, some regard it as a mere illustration of the oriental predilection for male children, not intended to have any special emphasis, while others make it significant of strength as well as numbers in the increase of the people. As to the application of the passage there is nothing in the terms employed which can determine it, but it must follow the sense put upon the foregoing context or the general hypothesis of the interpreter. The parturition is a figure for the whole eventful crisis of the change of dispensations, and the consequent change in the condition of the church. This indestructible ideal person, when she might have seemed to be reduced to nothing by the defection of the natural Israel, is vastly and suddenly augmented by the introduction of the gentiles, a succession of events which is here most appropriately represented as the birth of a male child without the pains of childbirth.

8. *Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall a land be brought forth in one day, or shall a nation be born at once? For Zion hath travailed, she hath also brought forth her children.* This verse, in the form of pointed interrogation, represents the event previously mentioned as without example. The terms of the sentence are exceedingly appropriate both to the return from Babylon and the future restoration of the Jews, but admit at the same time of a wider application to the change of dispensations as the birth of the church of the New Testament. The reference is merely to the short time required for the birth, as if he had said, she has (already) travailed, she has also brought forth.

9. *Shall I bring to the birth and not cause to bring forth? saith Jehovah. Or am I the one causing to bring forth, and shall I snare up? saith thy God.* The sense now rest upon the figure by the

general consent of interpreters, is that he who begins the work may be expected to accomplish it, to be both its author and its finisher. The reason why it is expressed in this form is not any peculiar adaptation or expressiveness in these unusual metaphors, but simply that the increase of the church had been already represented as a birth, and the additional ideas of the writer are expressed without a change of figure. The precise connection of the verse with that before it seems to be that it extenuates the wonder which had been described, by representing it as something which was to be expected in the case supposed. That is to say, if God had undertaken to supply the place of what his church had lost by new accessions, the extent and suddenness of the effect could not be matters of surprise. On the contrary, it would have been indeed surprising, if he who began the change had stopped it short, and interfered for the prevention of his own designs. With the metaphor of this verse and the one preceding, compare ch. 26 : 18.

10. *Rejoice ye with Jerusalem and exult in her, all that love her; be glad with her with gladness, all those mourning for her.* This is an indirect prediction of the joyful change awaiting Zion, clothed in the form of a command or invitation to her friends to rejoice with her. Different interpreters, according to their various exegetical hypotheses, explain this as a prophecy of Israel's ancient restoration from the Babylonish exile, or of their future restoration from the present exile and dispersion, or of the glorious enlargement of the church after the excision of the unbelieving Jews and the throes of that great crisis in which old things passed away and the new heavens and the new earth came into existence; which last I believe to be the true sense, for reasons which have been already fully stated.

11. *That ye may suck and be satisfied from the breast of her consolations, that ye may milk out and enjoy yourselves from the*

*fulness (or the full breast) of her glory.* Those who have sympathized with Zion in her joys and sorrows shall partake of her abundance and her glory. The figure of a mother is continued, but beautifully varied. *Suck and be satisfied, milk out and enjoy yourselves,* may be regarded as examples of hendiadys, meaning *suck to satiety* and *milk out with delight*; but no such change in the form of the translation is required or admissible. Glory includes wealth or abundance, but much more, viz. all visible superiority or excellence.

12. *For thus saith Jehovah, Behold I am extending to her peace like a river, and like an overflowing stream the glory of nations—and ye shall suck—on the side shall ye be borne, and on the knees shall ye be dandled.* By a beautiful figure the Prophet represents a river suddenly or gradually widening its channel or its flow until it reaches to a certain spot, its actual submersion being not expressed, though it may be implied. *Peace* is here to be taken in its frequent sense of welfare or prosperity. (See above, on ch. 48: 18.) The words *and ye shall suck* are added to announce a resumption of the figure of the foregoing verse. The objects of address in this verse are the sons of Zion, to be gathered from all nations.

13. *As a man whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you, and in Jerusalem shall ye be comforted.* The image is essentially the same with that in ch. 49: 15, but with a striking variation. The English Version, which, in multitudes of cases, inserts *man* where the original expression is indefinite, translating *ὁδότης*, for example, always *no man*, here reverses the process and dilutes *a man* to *one*. The same liberty is taken by many other versions old and new, occasioned no doubt by a feeling of the incongruity of making a full-grown man the subject of maternal consolations. The difficulty might, if it were necessary, be avoided by explaining the word to mean a man-child,

as it does in Gen. 4 : 1. 1 Sam. 1 : 11, and in many other cases. But the truth is that the solecism, which has been so carefully expunged by these translators, is an exquisite trait of patriarchal manners, in their primitive simplicity. Compare Gen. 24 : 67. Judges 17 : 2. 1 Kings 2 : 19, 20, and the affecting scenes between Thetis and Achilles in the Iliad. *In Jerusalem* suggests the only means by which these blessings are to be secured, viz. a union of affection and of interest with the Israel of God, to whom alone they are promised.

14. *And ye shall see, and your heart shall leap (with joy), and your bones like grass shall sprout, and the hand of Jehovah shall be known to his servants, and he shall be indignant at his enemies.* The object of address still continues to be those who had loved Zion, and had mourned for her, and whom God had promised to comfort in Jerusalem. They are here assured that they shall see for themselves the fulfilment of these promises. The hand of God is known when his power is recognized as the cause of any given effect. This clause is important as affording a transition from the promise to the threatening, in accordance with the Prophet's constant practice of presenting the salvation of God's people as coincident and simultaneous with the destruction of his enemies.

15. *For lo, Jehovah in fire will come, and like the whirlwind his chariots, to appease in fury his anger, and his rebuke in flames of fire.* This is an amplification of the brief phrase at the end of v. 14. *In fire*, that is enveloped and surrounded by it, as on Sinai. (See above, ch. 29 : 6 30 : 27, 30, and compare Ps. 50 : 3.) The second clause is repeated in Jer. 4 : 13. The points of comparison are swiftness and violence. The allusion is to the two-wheeled chariots of ancient warfare. Some suppose angels to be meant, on the authority of Ps. 68 : 17. (Compare Ps. 18 : 10. 2 Kings 2 : 11. 6 : 17. Hab. 3 : 8.) The Eng-

lish Version supplies *with* before *his chariots*, but this is forbidden by the order of the words in Hebrew, and unnecessary, as the *chariots* may be construed either with *shall come* or with the substantive verb *are* or *shall be*. God's *rebuks* is often coupled with his wrath as its effect or practical manifestation. (See above, ch. 17 : 13. 51 : 20. 54 : 9.) The whole verse represents Jehovah, considered in relation to his enemies, as a consuming fire. (Deut. 4 : 24. Heb. 12 : 29. Comp. 2 Thess. 1 : 8.)

16. *For by fire is Jehovah striving and by his sword with all flesh, and multiplied (or many) are the slain of Jehovah.* Fire and sword are mentioned as customary means of destruction, especially in war. The reflexive form has in the first clause its usual sense of reciprocal judgment, litigation, or contention in general. (See above, ch. 43 : 26.) A sure clue to the primary application of the verse before us is afforded by our Saviour's words in Matt. 24 : 22, where in speaking of the speedy destruction of Jerusalem he says that excepting the elect no flesh should be saved, i. e. no portion of the Jewish race but those who were ordained to everlasting life through faith in him. This application of Isaiah's prophecy agrees exactly with the view already taken of the whole preceding context as relating to that great decisive crisis in the history of the church and of the world, the dissolution of the old economy and the inauguration of the new. According to this view of the passage what is here said of fire, sword, and slaughter, was fulfilled not only as a figurative prophecy of general destruction, but in its strictest sense in the terrific carnage which attended the extinction of the Jewish state, and of which, more emphatically than of any other event outwardly resembling it, it might be said that *many were the slain of Jehovah*.

17. *The (men) hallowing themselves and the (men) cleansing themselves to (or towards) the gardens after o. e in the midst, eaters*



of swine's flesh and vermin and mouse, together shall cease (or come to an end), saith Jehovah. This verse is closely connected with the one before it, and explains who are meant by *the slain of Jehovah*. It is almost universally agreed that these are here described as gross idolaters. But even among those who so understand it, there is no small difference of opinion in relation to particular expressions. The class of persons meant is obviously the same as that described in ch. 65 : 3, 5, the gardens and the swine's flesh being common to both. The reflexive participles in the first clause are technical terms for ceremonial purification under the law of Moses, here transferred to heathen rites. The words *after one* are those which constitute the principal difficulty of the sentence. This some have undertaken to remove by emendations of the text, so as to mean far back, one by one, or one after the other. Some, without a change of text, explain the numeral *one*, as agreeing either with grove, or with pool, or with tree, or with priest or priestess. This last may be given as the current explanation, in which an allusion is supposed to an idolatrous procession led by a hierophant. Others apply *one* to the idol, so called in contempt, *one* being then equivalent to the Latin *quidam, nescio quem*. Others treat אֲדָד as the proper name of a Syrian idol, called by Sanchoniathon Ἀδωδος and by Pliny and Macrobius *Adad*, the last writer adding expressly that the name means *one*. Henderson calls attention to a striking coincidence between the use of this word here and the constant application of the cognate one in Arabic by the Mohammedans to God as being One, in express contradiction to the doctrine of the Trinity. Besides the difficulty which attends the absolute use of the numeral without a noun, there is another of the same kind arising from the like use of *midst* without anything to limit or determine it, as meaning the interior or court of an oriental house, or the midst of the grove or garden, where the idol was commonly erected, or the midst of the crowd or procession of

worshippers. As to the eating of swine's flesh, see above, on ch. 65 : 4. חֲמִץ may either have its generic sense of abomination or abominable food, or the more specific sense of flesh offered to idols, or of the smaller unclean animals, whether quadrupeds, insects, or reptiles, to which it is specially applied in the Law. In favour of the more specific meaning is the collocation of the word between swine's flesh and the mouse, or, as the modern writers understand the word, the jerboa or oriental field-mouse, which is said to be eaten by the Arabs. The actual use of any kind of mouse in the ancient heathen rites has never been established, the modern allegations of the fact being founded on the place before us. As to the application of the passage, it is not to be expected that the advocates of any exegetical hypothesis will here abandon it if able by any means to reconcile it with the Prophet's language. I see no cause to change my previous conclusion that this prophecy relates to the excision of the Jews and the vocation of the gentiles, or in other words the change of dispensations. The apparent difficulty which arises from the description of such gross idolatry as all admit to have had no existence among the Jews after their return from exile, is removed by the consideration that the Jews were cast off not for the sins of a single generation, but of the race throughout its ancient history, and that idolatry was not only one of these, but that which most abounded in the days of the Prophet; so that when he looks forward to the great catastrophe and paints its causes, he naturally dips his pencil in the colours which were nearest and most vivid to his own perceptions, without meaning to exclude from his description other sins as great or greater in themselves, which afterwards supplanted these revolting practices as the besetting national transgressions of apostate Israel. A writer in the early days of Wilberforce and Clarkson, in denouncing God's wrath upon England, would most naturally place the oppression of the negro in the foreground of his picture, even if he had been gifted to

foresee that this great evil in the course of time would be completely banished from the sight of men by new forms of iniquity successively usurping its conspicuous position, such as excessive luxury, dishonest speculation, and ambitious encroachment on the rightful possessions of inferior powers in the east. If it were really God's purpose to destroy that mighty kingdom for its national offences, he would not lose sight of ancient half-forgotten crimes, because they have long since given place to others more or less atrocious. So in reference to Israel, although the generation upon whom the final blow fell were hypocrites, not idolaters, the misdeeds of their fathers entered into the account, and they were cast off not merely as the murderers of the Lord of Life, but as apostates who insulted Jehovah to his face by bowing down to stocks and stones in groves and gardens, and by eating swine's flesh, the abomination, and the mouse. And as all this was included in the grounds of their righteous condemnation, it might well be rendered prominent in some of the predictions of that great catastrophe. Another possible interpretation of the passage, in direct application to the unbelieving Jews who were contemporary with our Saviour, is obtained by supposing an allusion to v. 3, where those who still clung to the abrogated ritual are put upon a level with the grossest idolaters, and may here be absolutely so described, just as the rulers and people of Jerusalem in ch. 1:9 are addressed directly as rulers of Sodom and people of Gomorrah, on account of the comparison immediately preceding. This view of the passage is undoubtedly favoured by the mention of swine's flesh in both place, which would naturally make the one suggestive of the other. Neither of these exegetical hypotheses requires the assumption of imaginary facts, such as the practice of idolatry by the Jews in exile, or their return to it hereafter.

18. *And I—their works and their thoughts—it is come—to gather*

*all the nations and the tongues—and they shall come and see my glory.* This is an exact transcript of the Hebrew sentence, the grammatical construction of which has much perplexed interpreters. In this obscurity and doubt as to the syntax, there is something attractive in the theory which supplies nothing, but regards the first clause as a series of broken and irregular ejaculations, in which the expression of the thought is interrupted by the writer's feelings. Common to all these explanations is the general assumption that the words and thoughts of the persons in question are in some way represented as the cause or the occasion of the gathering mentioned in the other clause. The use of the word *tongues* as an equivalent to *nations*, has reference to national distinctions springing from diversity of language, and is founded on Gen. 10 : 5, 20, 31, by the influence of which passage and the one before us it became a phrase of frequent use in Daniel, whose predictions turn so much upon the calling of the gentiles. (Dan. 3 : 4, 7. 4 : 1. 5 : 19). To *see the glory* of Jehovah is a phrase repeatedly used elsewhere to denote the special manifestation of his presence and his power (ch. 40 : 5. 59 : 19. 60 : 2), and is applied by Ezekiel to the display of his punitive justice in the sight of all mankind (Ezek. 39 : 21). As we have seen that the crimes described in the foregoing verses are not those of the heathen, but of the apostate Jews, whose deeds and thoughts must therefore be intended in the first clause, the explanation most in harmony with this immediate context, as well as with the whole drift of the prophecy thus far, is that which makes the verse before us a distinct prediction of the calling of the gentiles, both to witness the infliction of God's vengeance on the Jews, and to supply their places in his church or chosen people. It is perhaps to the language of this prophecy that Christ himself alludes in Matt. 24 : 31. (Compare also John 5 : 25.)

19. *And I will place in them (or among them) a sign, and I will*

*send of them survivors (or escaped ones) to the nations, Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, drawers of the bow, Tubal and Javan, the distant isles, which have not heard my fame and have not seen my glory, and they shall declare my glory among the nations.* Most modern writers agree in determining the sense of the first phrase from that which it evidently has in Ex. 10 : 1, 2, where God is twice said to have *placed his signs among* the Egyptians, with evident allusion to the plagues as miraculous evidences of his power. Explained by this analogy, the clause before us would appear to mean, I will work a miracle among them or before them. The escaped, as in ch. 4 : 3, are the survivors of the judgments previously mentioned. These are sent to *the nations*, of whom some are then particularly mentioned. For the sense of *Tarshish*, see above, on ch. 60 : 9. Its use here may be regarded as decisive of the question whether it denotes *the sea*, since *Tarshish* is added to the general term *nations* precisely as the other names are added afterwards. The incongruity of this translation of the word is exhibited without disguise in the Vulgate, *ad gentes, in mare, in Africam*, etc., so that the *the sea* stands first in a catalogue of *nations*. *Pul* is identified by Bochart with an island in the Nile on the frontier of Ethiopia and Egypt. Others regard it as an orthographical variation or an error of the text for *Put* or *Phut*, which is elsewhere joined with *Lud* (Jer 46 : 9. Ezek. 27 : 10) and repeatedly written in the Septuagint *φοῦδ* (Gen. 10 : 6. 1 Chron. 1 : 8), the same form which that version here employs. All agree that the name belongs to Africa, like that which follows, *Lud*, the *Ludim* of Gen. 10 : 13 and Jer. 46 : 9, elsewhere represented as warriors (Ezek. 27 : 10. 30 : 5). *Javan* is the Hebrew name for Greece (Gen. 10 : 2. Dan. 8 : 21. Zech. 9 : 13), perhaps identical with *Ion* or *Ionian*. The same name essentially exists in Sanscrit. The nations specified are obviously given as a sample. This is rendered still more certain by the addition of the general expression, *the remote coasts or islands*; for the sense of which see

above, on ch. 41 : 1. The suggestion is not without plausibility that some of the obscure names here used were selected for the express purpose of conveying the idea of remote and unknown regions. The restriction of the promise to the very places mentioned would be like the proceeding of a critic who should argue hereafter from the mention of Greenland, India, Africa, and Ceylon, in Heber's Missionary Hymn, that the zeal of English Protestants extended only to those portions of the heathen world. As this interpretation of the hymn would be forbidden, not only by the general analogy of figurative language and of lyric composition, but by the express use of such universal phrases as "from pole to pole" in the very same connection, so in this case it is plain that the essential meaning of the whole enumeration is that expressed in the following clause: *who have not heard my fame and have not seen my glory.* As to the meaning of the whole verse, or the nature of the event which it predicts, interpreters differ in exact accordance with their several hypotheses. The only way in which these seeming contradictions can be reconciled is by assuming what is in itself most natural and perfectly agreeable to usage, namely, that v. 19 does not describe the progress of events beyond the time referred to in v. 18, but explains in what way the assemblage there described is to be brought about. I will gather all nations. By what means? I will send those who escape my judgments to invite them. Both verses being then collateral and equally dependent on v. 17, the pronoun *them* refers to the persons there described, viz. the apostate Jews, whose excision is the subject of this prophecy. The whole may then be paraphrased as follows: Such being their character, I will cast them off and gather the nations to take their place; for which end I will send forth the survivors of the nation, the elect for whose sake these days shall be shortened when all besides them perish, to declare my glory in the regions where my name has never yet been heard. Thus understood, the passage is exactly descrip-



tive of the preaching of the gospel at the beginning of the new dispensation. All the first preachers were escaped Jews, plucked as brands from the burning, saved from that perverse generation (Acts 2 : 40). The *sign* will then denote the whole miraculous display of divine power, in bringing the old dispensation to a close and introducing the new, including the destruction of the unbelieving Jews on the one hand, and on the other all those signs and wonders and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost (Heb. 2 : 4), which Paul calls the signs of an apostle (2 Cor. 12 : 12), and which Christ himself had promised should follow them that believed (Mark 16 : 17). All these were signs placed among them, i. e. among the Jews, to the greater condemnation of the unbelievers, and to the salvation of such as should be saved. That there will not be hereafter an analogous display of divine power in the further execution of this promise, cannot be proved, and need not be affirmed; but if there never should be, it will still have had a glorious fulfilment in a series of events compared with which the restoration of the Jewish people to the land of Canaan is of little moment.

20. *And they shall bring all your brethren from all nations an oblation to Jehovah, with horses, and with chariot, and with litters, and with mules, and with dromedaries, on my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith Jehovah, as the children of Israel bring the oblation in a clean vessel to the house of Jehovah.* The verb at the beginning may be construed either with the messengers of v. 19, or indefinitely as denoting ‘men shall bring your brethren,’ equivalent in Hebrew usage to ‘your brethren shall be brought.’ Although this last construction is in perfect agreement with analogy, the other is not only unobjectionable but entitled to the preference as much more graphic and expressive. The survivors sent forth to the nations are then described as bringing back the converts to the true religion as an offer-

ing to Jehovah. Their return for this purpose is described as easy, swift, and even splendid, all the choicest methods of conveyance used in ancient times being here combined to express that idea. As to the sense of the particular expressions there is no longer any dispute or doubt. The *minhah* was the stated vegetable offering of the Mosaic ritual. It was commonly composed of flour with oil and incense; but the name, in its widest sense, may be considered as including fruits and grain in a crude as well as a prepared state. This oblation seems to be selected here as free from the concomitant ideas of cruelty and grossness which were inseparable from bloody sacrifices. The only general exegetical question in relation to this verse is whether *your brethren* means the scattered Jews or the converted gentiles. Here again, all depends upon a foregone conclusion. How inextricably this one case is implicated in the general question as to the subject and design of the prophecy, appears from the fact that those who apply this expression to the Jews content themselves with citing all the other places in Isaiah where precisely the same doubt exists as in the case before us. In favour of the other explanation may be cited Paul's description of the gentiles as an oblation which he as an officiating priest offered up to God. (Rom. 15 : 16.) Although it might be doubted whether Paul there formally explains or even quotes this prophecy, his obvious allusion to its images and terms shows at least that he considered them as bearing such an application, and in the absence of any other gives it undoubtedly a clear advantage. Another suggestion not unworthy of attention, is that there may here be special reference to the early converts from the heathen world considered as the *first fruits* of the spiritual harvest; which agrees well with the wide use of the technical term *minhah*, as already stated, and with the frequent application of the figure of first fruits to the same subject in the books of the New Testament.

21. *And also of them will I take for Priests for Levites saith Jehovah.* Many manuscripts supply *and* before the second *for*. The peculiar form of the common text may be intended to identify the two classes, as in point of fact the Priests were all without exception Levites. It seems at least to be implied that the distinction is in this case of no consequence, both names being given lest either should appear to be excluded. The only question here is to what the pronoun *them* refers. The Jews of course refuse to understand it of the gentiles, except as meaning *for the Priests and Levites*, for their service, as hewers of wood and drawers of water! Of those who adopt the natural construction which refers *of them* to gentile converts, some understand this as a promise that they shall all be admitted to the spiritual priesthood common to believers. But others, on the ground that the expressions, *I will take* and *of them*, both imply selection and discrimination, refer it to the Christian ministry, to which the gentiles have as free access as Jews. There can be no doubt that this office might be so described in a strongly figurative context, where the functions of the ministry were represented in the same connection as sacerdotal functions. But the only offering here mentioned is the offering of the gentile converts as an oblation to Jehovah, and the priesthood meant seems to be merely the ministry of those by whom their conversion is effected. The most natural interpretation seems to be as follows. The mass of the Jewish people was to be cast off from all connection with the church; but the elect who should escape were to be sent among the nations and to bring them for an offering to Jehovah, as the Priests and Levites offered the oblation at Jerusalem. But this agency was not to be confined to the Jews who were first entrusted with it; not only of them, but also of the gentiles themselves, priests and Levites should be chosen to offer this oblation, i. e. to complete the vocation of the gentiles. Should the context be supposed to require a still more

general meaning, it may be that the sacerdotal mediation of the ancient Israel between Jehovah and the other nations, which was symbolized by the Levitical and Aaronic priesthood, was to cease with the necessity that brought it into being, and to leave the divine presence as accessible to one race as another.

22. *For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I am making (or about to make), are standing (or about to stand) before me, saith Jehovah, so shall stand your name and your seed.* To the reference of the preceding verse to the gentiles it is urged as one objection, that the verse before us does not give a reason for the promise so explained; for how could it be said that God would put them on a level with the Jews because the name and succession of the latter were to be perpetual? But this objection rests upon the false assumption, running through the whole interpretation of this book, that the promise is addressed to Israel as a nation; whereas it is addressed to Israel as a church, from which the natural descendants of Jacob for the most part have been cut off, and the object of this verse is to assure the church that notwithstanding this excision it should still continue to exist, not only as *a church*, but as *the church*, the identical body which was clothed in the forms of the old dispensation, and which still survives when they are worn out and rejected. The grand error incident to a change of dispensations was the very one which has perverted and obscured the meaning of these prophecies, the error of confounding the two Israels whom Paul so carefully distinguishes, and of supposing that the promises given to the church when externally identified with one race are continued to that race even after its excision from the church. It was to counteract this very error that the verse before us was recorded, in which God's people, comprehending a remnant of the natural Israel and a vast accession from the gentiles, are assured that God regards them as his own chosen people, not a new one, but

the same that was of old, and that the very object of the great revolution, here and elsewhere represented as a new creation, was to secure their perpetuity and constant recognition as his people. Since then he creates a new heaven and a new earth for this very purpose, that purpose cannot be defeated while these heavens and that earth endure. The Jews themselves understand this as a promise that their national pre-eminence shall be perpetual.

23. *And it shall be (or come to pass) that from new-moon to new-moon (or on every new moon), and from sabbath to sabbath (or on every sabbath), shall come all flesh to bow themselves (or worship) before me, saith Jehovah.* The form of expression in the first clause is so idiomatic and peculiar that it does not admit of an exact translation. A slavish copy of the original would be, 'from the sufficiency of new moon in its new moon and from the sufficiency of sabbath in its sabbath' For the usage of the Hebrew phrase, see above, on ch. 28 : 19. It sometimes stands where we should say *as often as* (1 Sam. 18 : 30. 1 Kings 14 : 28). Although the form is so peculiar, there is no doubt as to the essential meaning, viz. from new moon to new moon, or at every new moon. At these stated periods of public worship under the old economy (those of most frequent recurrence being specified) *all flesh shall come up to worship before me.* There is no more need of excluding Jerusalem from one verse than the other, since the Prophet, in accordance with his constant practice, speaks of the emancipated church in language borrowed from her state of bondage ; and that this form of expression is a natural one, may be inferred from the facility with which it is perpetuated in the common parlance of the church and of religion, the Jerusalem or Zion of our prayers and hymns being perfectly identical with that of the prophecy before us. Thus understood, the verse is a prediction of the general diffusion of the true religion with its stated observances and solemn forms.

24. *And they shall go forth and gaze upon the carcases of the men who revolted (or apostatized) from me, for their worm shall not die and their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an horror to all flesh.* The first verb may be construed indefinitely, 'they, i. e. men,' without defining them; but in so vivid a description, it is certainly more natural to give the verbs a definite subject, and especially the one that had been previously introduced, viz. the worshippers assembled from all nations to do homage at Jerusalem. The grand theme of these prophecies, as we have seen, is the relation of God's people to himself and to the world, and in the latter stages of its history, to that race with which it was once outwardly identical. The great catastrophe with which the vision closes is the change of dispensations, comprehending the final abolition of the ceremonial law and its concomitants, the introduction of a spiritual worship and the consequent diffusion of the church, its vast enlargement by the introduction of all gentile converts to complete equality of privilege and honour with the believing Jews and the excision of the unbelieving Jews from all connection with the church or chosen people, which they once imagined to have no existence independent of themselves. The contrast between these two bodies, the rejected Jews and their believing brethren forming one great mass with the believing gentiles, is continued to the end, and presented for the last time in these two concluding verses, where the whole is condensed into a single vivid spectacle, of which the central figure is Jerusalem, and its walls the dividing line between the two contrasted objects. Within is the true Israel, without the false. Within, a great congregation, even "all flesh," come from the east and the west, and the north and the south, while the natural children of the kingdom are cast out. (Matt. 8: 12.) The end of the former is left to be imagined or inferred from other prophecies, but that of the latter is described, or suggested in a way more terrible than all description. In the



valley of the son of Hinnom, under the very brow of Zion and Moriah, where the children were once sacrificed to Moloch, and where purifying fires were afterwards kept ever burning, the apostate Israel is finally exhibited, no longer living but committed to the flames of Tophet. To render our conceptions more intense, the worm is added to the flame, and both are represented as undying. That the contrast hitherto maintained may not be forgotten even in this closing scene, the men within the walls are seen by the light of those funereal fires coming forth and gazing at the ghastly scene, not with delight as some interpreters pretend, but, as the text expressly says, with horror. In its primary meaning, this is a prophecy of ruin to the unbelieving Jews, apostate Israel. But as the safety of the chosen remnant was to be partaken by all other true believers, so the ruin of the unbelieving Jew is to be shared by every other unbeliever. Thus the verse becomes descriptive of the final doom of the ungodly, without any deviation from its proper sense, or any supposition of a mere allusion or accommodation in the use of the same figures by our Lord himself in reference to future torments. All that is requisite to reconcile and even to identify the two descriptions is the consideration that the state of ruin here described is final and continuous, however it may be divided, in the case of individuals, between the present life and that which is to come. Hell is of both worlds, so that in the same essential sense although in different degrees, it may be said both of him who is still living but accursed, and of him who perished centuries ago, that his worm dieth not and his fire is not quenched.

THE END.







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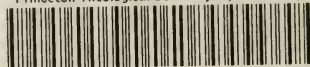






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